

OUR BLOOD-SOAKED 2ND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

NO. 6

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GORETM SHRIEK



WARNING:
Contains disturbing material
and is not intended
for children!

CHOK!

HI, GORE-
METS. I'VE--UH,
I MEAN, WE'VE
GOT LOTS TO SHOW
YOU THIS ISSUE...
BUT I'LL HAVE TO **CUT**
THIS INTRO OFF! SEE,
GORE HEARD I'VE GOT
MY **OWN ZINE** COMING
UP... AND IT'S ALL I COULD
DO TO KEEP HIM FROM
SLASHING HIS WRISTS!
WHAT TO DO? WELL, I'M
STUMPED... AXE ME
NEXT ISSUE! TIME TO
=GULP= **SPLIT!**

HELP
ME!

DRIKT!

GOOSE SHRIEK

This Issue Features:

CREATOR, PUBLISHER, EXECUTIVE EDITOR: TOM SKULAN
MANAGING EDITOR: STEPHEN R. BISSETTE

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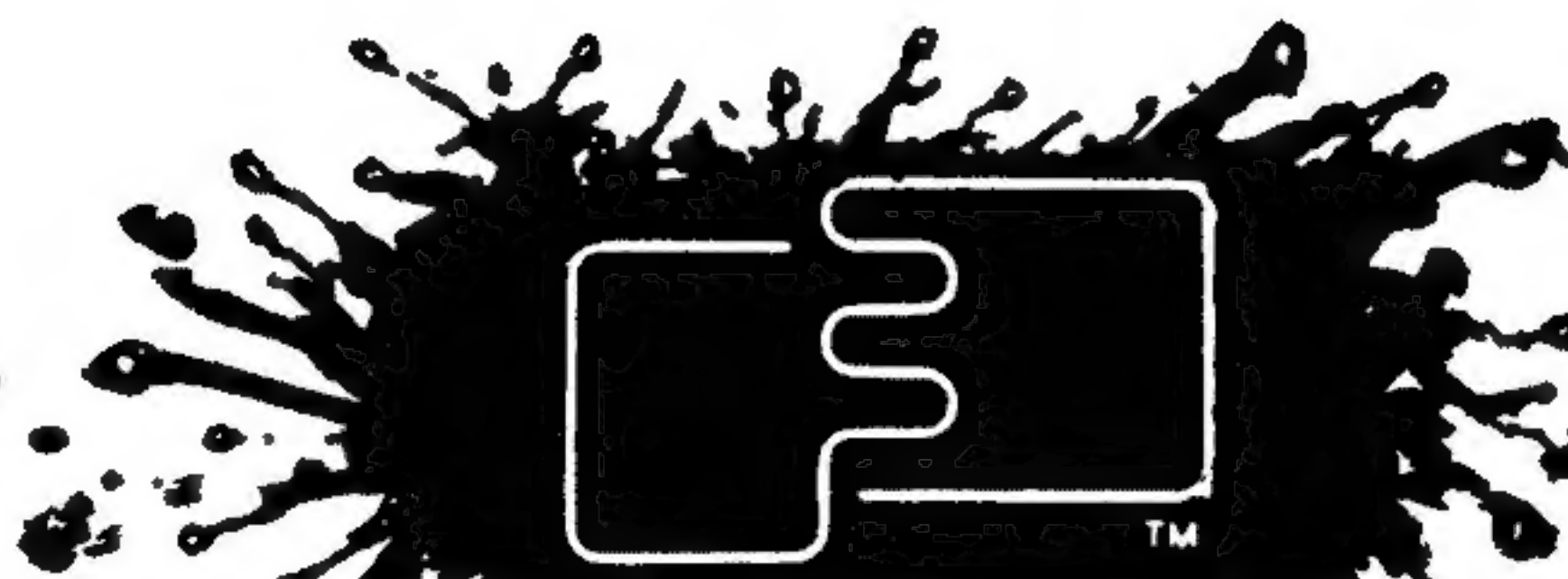
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Warren Comics in



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October 30, 1973, was more than just the eve of Halloween. It was the day that Warren Comics Editor Bill DuBay finally made his intentions clear to the seven writers he handpicked for the Warren writing staff a month earlier. We were not just writing comic book horror stories. We were to become the EC comics of the Seventies.

Dube sent us several of the EC color reprints being published at the time by the sadly shortlived *East Coast Comix* venture. "These books illustrate to some degree the kind of stories we want to publish and the direction we're heading in," he wrote in an accompanying memo. "We're not going to copy the EC style of course, but . . . their stories were imaginative, visual and very well thought out and this is basically what we want. Only better. The early EC stories are revered by fans all over the world because they never ceased to strive for perfection. The same thing goes for Warren Publishing. We create classics. And we're making comic history now."

"Read them," Dube told us, "remember them from when you first read them, enjoy them again. And then get to your typewriter and make the world forget them." It was this statement, 15 years ago, that characterized the second great period at Warren for me. The first great period began in 1964 with new black and white stories by EC artists and some excellent EC disciples, but the scripts they illustrated were period stories patterned after the horror films of *Universal* and *Hammer*. Occasionally a writer like Archie Goodwin would sneak in an original idea, apparently when no one was looking, but that was a rarity. After the first three or four years of the run the EC artists departed in pursuit of bigger and steadier paychecks and the artists that were left gave *CREEPY*, *EERIE* and *VAMPIRELLA* a look as grey as a London fog. The writing was too frequently the sort where the writer backs into a story, thinking of a twist ending first, then contriving six or eight pages of events that almost convince the reader that his ending could happen.

Gradually Warren worked its way back up. The discovery of Tom Sutton and Rich Corben gave the books an occasional treat for the eye. Poetic and thoughtful scripts by a writer like T. Casey Brennan gave the reader's mind a bone to chew on. There were would-be comic book writers around the country waiting to be discovered, like me, and editors at Warren like John R. Cochran willing to discover them. This is where I came in, and where I became a script writer for Warren in the early Seventies.

It is difficult for most writers in the comic book field to become prima



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donnas. At best, most of us are like Hollywood character actors, perpetually acting out the part of the folks in those Mastercard commercials who ask, "Do you know me?" Readers recall us by a story title. People who remember me from Warren remember the story "Top to Bottom." People who recognize me from *Eclipse* remember a story I wrote last year about Buster Crabbe. Soon everybody who read the first issue of *TABOO* will probably remember that I wrote the eye story. Since those stories are not autobiographical and this one is, it may interest you to know something real about me.

I'm kind of an old guy, if we're talking years. To paraphrase a song, I was weird before being weird was cool. I grew up in the fifties, smuggling EC horror comics into the house under the noses of my vigilant parents, reading them over and over again so that when they were inevitably discovered and destroyed I would know them by heart. I pretended from time to time that the Crypt Keeper and the Old Witch were my real parents and Frankenstein was my big brother and big kids would never pick on me again. I had Boris Karloff's autograph, not Ted Williams's. I got more of a bang from being EC Fan-Addict Number 2715 than from being a Cub Scout. When other boys were fantasizing about Marilyn Monroe, I dreamed of Simone Signoret in "DIABOLIQUE" I was focused.

It was something I never completely outgrew, even in my stuffiest periods.

When the Comics Code killed the horror comics, I became a high school science fiction fan, had my share of letters published in the magazines, corresponded widely with other fans and wrote articles about EC comics in a couple of s-f fanzines. When college threatened to make me an intellectual, I discovered the early Marvel superhero comics and wrote articles about them for our newspaper, the *COLGATE MAROON*. (Yes, Bugs Bunny would've loved us.) One of those articles was quoted in an issue of the *NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE MAGAZINE* and in big bold letters on the back cover of the Lancer Books paperback collection of *SPIDERMAN* stories. Does the line, "If Charley Brown wore a skin-tight costume and fought crime, he would be Spiderman," ring a bell? I wrote it, although Lancer only credited the *MAROON*.

In 1971 I had been a newspaper reporter for a year and a half. I was married to my first wife, Karin, and we lived in a small haunted house on Fish Flake Hill in Beverly, Mass., one of the oldest neighborhoods in America. Like everybody else, we had a lot and we lacked a lot. One of the

the 70's:



© 1966 Warren

missing things that I felt ready to do something about was a published short story.

I had good reason to feel ready. Newspaper reporters did a lot of writing, most of it on tight deadlines, and they don't mess around. From the day I started I was writing 1,500 to 3,000 words a day, five days a week, most of it before 9 o'clock in the morning. It adds up: 390,000 words a year, and as of February this year almost 7.5 million words after 19 years. If math is your idea of a good time, figure what that comes to at 250 words a printed book page. That's the day job.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The following paragraphs may have some value as solace to beginning writers. I'll do my best to make them funny enough that the rest of us won't be too bored.

My 30th birthday was coming up in November. I told Karin I wanted to get a story published by then, revised a fantasy story I wrote while I was in college and quickly accumulated two or three more rejection slips from the few magazines publishing fantasy. That was when I tried Warren. Associate Editor John R. Cochran sent my story back with a note—an actual typewritten note indicating that it had been read and seriously considered. I vowed that now that I had Cochran's attention I was going to keep it. The note pointed out that my story, being prose, was not the right style for a comic book script. With Karin's help, I immediately devised a comic book script format—I remember calling the panels "frames" and sent the story out again. It came back, this time because Cochran had just bought a story about the same esoteric subjects (*a Hand of Glory*). My dream remained afloat. I could sell this market. I could practically smell the ink on my first check. All I needed was another idea. Actually, I finally settled for another of my college stories and when that bounced back, I tried another idea. When that bounced back twice, it was late August, little more than two months before my arbitrary deadline, and clearly time to rethink my strategy.

Since my longer stories weren't clicking yet, I decided to try something shorter. The one- or two-page fact pieces Warren published inside the covers of each issue looked like a good place to start, and I had a clipping from the *BOSTON GLOBE* that seemed like a perfect one-pager. It was about a farmhand whose embalmed body was stored in a funeral home for 72 years as an example of embalming. I converted the article into a comic book story, moving as fast as a jackrabbit in a singles bar. New writers are always terrified that someone else will submit their ideas first. The pros know that



The Run for the E&C Roses

by

Jack Butterworth



PART I

treatment and style outweigh the idea. Sure enough, the first version was rejected.

Luckily for me, I was in the habit of including a brief but complete plot outline in a covering letter I sent with each script. Cochran like the outline but not the script. I revised it, but it still wasn't clear. The second rejection slip arrived in October. I wrote it for the third time. I was beginning to hate the flavor of stamps. One Saturday afternoon I arrived home to find that Karin had taped a huge sign in the front window. "Congratulations, Jack." I had made my first deadline. I had a ten-dollar check to prove it. Funny. When I really sniffed it, it didn't smell like anything, but it still meant everything to me. I had come of age.

My next story, a piece of fiction, began as a one-pager. Cochran rejected it, suggesting I convert it to a longer story. My next version was five pages. It came back with the most specific advice I had ever received. Make it less like *FRANKENSTEIN*, drop the army of dead soldiers and try not to use a typewriter that vibrates. If asked, I would have carved those words in stone. They were black-and-white proof that he actually like this story. I sent it back with a new title, "*The Resurrection Man*" and he bought it. I was only twenty-five dollars richer, but now I was a complete writer. People who have never written a short story—and there are even a number of comic book pros who never have—will hopefully realize that finishing and selling a successful short story carries with it a rush that is better than drugs. Short stories have never paid much, but to a writer they represent a pleasure-jolt to the ego that nothing else does as well.

Once "*The Resurrection Man*" was sold, a Hollywood biographer might start warming up the soft pink sunset and the violins. Not a chance. It took me ninety days to sell a one-page story and six weeks to sell a long story, but

IT IS THE MIDDLE OF MAN'S STORY, TOO!
WITHIN THE CREATURE, WITHIN A GALAXY,
AN EARTH SPACE SHIP HAS ACHIEVED
INTERGALACTIC TRAVEL!



© 1964 Vampirella #40 The Time Eater!
By Paul Neary & Jack Butterworth
Warren Publishing Co.

Paul Neary, a young British artist, worked on the first and last full-length stories I had published by Warren and it's interesting to see what he did with them. "The Resurrection Man" (EERIE 48) was a pastiche of the Frankenstein story which Warren published so many of in its early years, and it reads like opera. "Can't you see it in his eyes, Mister Bascomb? My husband, Gregor, was a frustrated doctor." Carl Laemmle, who produced the first FRANKENSTEIN feature for Universal Pictures, would've loved the way I Hammered that point home. Oh, boy... However, Paul's art never falters. Time and again he makes the old corny stuff work, using layout tricks beyond my wildest hopes to keep the story interesting. If you look closely at the artwork, you can see that Paul even used his fingerprints in the background to give the effect of stones in the castle wall. A wonderful job. How glad I am to have had Paul work on that script... and how relieved I am that I never wrote anything like that again.

In contrast, "The Time Eater" (VAMPIRELLA 40) is a wild s-f story which I based on two or three science fantasy stories by Damon Knight and Fritz Leiber about a world in which time flows backward. They never thought to explain why such a thing would happen. I came up with the concept of a creature that eats time and I was off, describing how that would work in detail. (I also threw in, as a feminist, the first women spaceship commander in comics.) With



© 1973 Eerie #48 The Resurrection Man
By Paul Neary & Jack Butterworth - Warren Pub. Co.

a concept like that to put across, Paul had the sensitivity to use more conservative layouts as each page unveils a new paradox. He alternated between pen and ink for the segments about people and wash for the pages that showed the creature. It was terrific. Gerry Boudreau told me in the fall of 1974 that he had seen the artwork for it. He told me the script was wild. I asked how the artwork looked. He said it looked wild.

If there was ever an artist at Warren who could suit his work to the needs of a script it was Paul Neary.

His work on the "Hunter" series made it the best of Warren's early serialized stories. It comes as no surprise to me to see that he is still at work today on Marvel's CAPTAIN AMERICA. If that series does fold I'm sure he'll have no trouble finding other work.

I was by no means a self-assured pro. I was a fledgling storyteller and I was not in touch with my feelings to the extent that a writer needs to be to produce consistently good stories. My plot ideas were better, but the details that made for good characterization were lacking, and knowing that made me less confident even when I had a good idea. Considering the stony road that short story writers have to walk in comics, I was very lucky.

Of the stories I wrote over the next year or so, some were based on my feelings. They were the ones that took the least rewriting. "Think of Me and I'll Be There" (EERIE 48) grew out of a night Karin and I spent with another couple in which Karin and Mike were downstairs photographing a nude model while Mike's wife and I stayed upstairs watching a television movie, WHEN MICHAEL CALLS, which has one of the scariest openings I've ever seen. The movie is about a woman who receives telephone calls from a child named Michael who died years ago. I hardly knew Mike's wife and the film whiled away one of the more awkward evenings of my early married life. Suddenly a plot began to take shape, proof that nature abhors a vacuum. How about—the words all my plots seemed to begin with—"a

girl who has the power of telekinesis, who can draw things toward her like a magnet? How about if she draws a dead boyfriend toward her because she misses him" but in so doing she brings about the death of another young man who loves her? I got a pencil and a piece of paper and wrote that down. It was totally unlike anything that was going on when I wrote it, but it was about someone that needed somebody the way I needed Karin in that social situation. Like most horror stories, it was a warning to the conscious mind. I've learned since then to be self-confident and not to depend on other people as I did.

The other plot was "Top to Bottom" (VAMPIRELLA 33), the story everybody seems to remember, the one with the brilliant art job by Rich Corben. I was lying on the living room floor one afternoon, have just come home from work. I think I was reading a copy of the Lynn Item, the newspaper I work for, and I suddenly put it aside. How about some toy from the future that lands in the past and people start playing with it? How about a cube with lights in it, or a light that moves from the top of the cube to the bottom when it is shaken, something that looks really simple, really

innocent? How about when it reaches the bottom of the cube it makes a connection and broadcasts the player's thoughts to all humanity, like a newspaper? Well, he might play again and negate the message. Okay, how about if the cube then miniaturizes the player and zaps him inside for awhile until the broadcast takes effect? Why would it do that? Shut up. I wrote this script with the feeling that I was missing something somewhere along the line, something I couldn't put my finger on. However, Marv Wolfman grabbed it and said he liked my handling of science fiction, and Karin loved it. I remember her talking enthusiastically about the concept, how in *the Renaissance* it was probably owned by an artist, and on and on. Karin hated horror stories for the most part and was my toughest critic. If she liked it, it was unusual. As for the feelings that went into this story, I was trying to help an on-again, off-again drug addict at this time, a guy who wanted to be a writer, (that cube did have an addictive side) and Karin was carrying our first son too. It was an unstable time for both of us. We were scared and we didn't know what to expect. It was the kind of time I'd like to revise if I could, but it ended with the two of us actually there when my son was born and a sense of total elation. It certainly made me think about the consequences of my actions.

I had reason to worry about the kind of world my baby would be coming into, and the effect that one person's addiction can have on a whole unsuspecting world. On the negative side, it was also about my desire to win one more victory before fatherhood made me dependent on a regular paycheck, and what might happen if I did.

One more comment and I'll get back to the juicy gossip. People who write short stories in any medium are not quite sane. They are writing for the love of it and the chance to gloat egotistically when one of their scripts is

remembered. It has nothing to do with money. Short stories have never been lucrative. It has to do with the kind of rush writers get writing a piece of their might-be lives so good that it entertains them and they know it will entertain the reader. Short story writers lead with their egos like standup comics. When the story dies they die. When it lives it's like touching pinkies with the ultimate reality.

Oddly enough, the several rewrites on the story I had the toughest time with, "Spare That Tree" (CREEPY 59), pale into insignificance when I recall the loyalty issue that came up while I was still trying to convince myself, an imaginary reader and John Cochran that servants who were forbidden to cut trees would still manage to chop down a Yule Log. Remember the *Hand of Glory* script Cochran had rejected? I did what seemed perfectly normal but turned out to be unthinkable. I sent it to another publisher.

When I look back on all this stuff, what happened really makes me laugh. There was a company called Skywald publishing black and white magazines title *PSYCHO* and *NIGHTMARE*. Since the logical thing to do in other genre fiction fields was to keep sending a story out until it was accepted. I sent my script to Skywald, where assistant editor Jeff Rovin read it and returned it, asking me to chop it from seven pages to four. I had it rewritten within a month. Jeff, who peppered his letters with references to meetings with Charlton Heston, Stan Lee and Dick Cavett, returned the condensed version, informing me somberly and poetically that the script now lacked atmosphere and happened too quickly. He said it needed to show the disintegration of time and locale. In a fit of desperation I showed the letter to Karin, who advised me to ignore it and revise the story again, and that's what I did. This time the script was actually forwarded from

Marv Wolfman is a good writer who could be called office-smart. He made the right moves at the right time. Even his temporary move from DC to Warren, where he served as editor from June 2 to December 1, 1972, gave him the breathing room to coordinate his next move to Marvel. He seemed more comfortable as a writer than an editor, doing his own script revisions instead of instructing the writer, but it was the Wolfman who taught me to write plot outlines, and tighten a script and he helped me arrive at

my own writing technique, in which each page becomes a self-contained unit (the Harvey Kurtzman method).

Wolfman did a three-page style guide for Warren writers including a comment about story content, "Generally good guys don't get killed unless the bad guy gets it as well." This was the prevalent philosophy of the color horror comics (mystery comics, they were called) at that time. It was due to change when Marv left. Maybe that was why he rewrote my script for "Think of Me

and I'll Be There" (EERIE 48), a story about three nice people who are faced with a horrific situation when they fail to comprehend the extent of a young woman's telekinetic ability. He made the tender scene in the story much tenderer, but his ending gave the telekinesis-powered corpse a will of its own, violating the logic of the plot. When I mentioned the rewrite to him at the 1973 New York comic convention he looked so guilt-struck that I only mentioned the good stuff.

Wolfman also inspired the heavy mood I put into "Dead Man's Race," and possibly the mention that script received from Stephen King in a 1973 *WRITER'S DIGEST*. He knew King and legend has it that when he left Warren there were some King comic book plots in the backlog inherited by his successor, Bill DuBay. Dube never took action on those, forcing King to become a famous horror novelist. I can't help wondering if any of them turned up in the *CREEPSHOW* movies.

It's interesting to note that Wolfman sent me this unpublished plot breakdown as an example of a plot outline in a letter.

"Page One: Fred sees a vampire attacking a giant eggplant. Fred is scared. He takes out his sword and attacks.

Page Two: Eggplant turns out to be Jim Warren in disguise. They duel. We learn here that the Eggplant came from another comic book company, a company which failed, and in revenge decided to take over Cleveland... which it is now in the process of doing. Fred knows his ulcer can't take the tension.

Page Three: The Eggplant and the Vampire break off. Fred destroys the Eggplant but the Vampire leaves, flies over city and attacks the Philharmonic String Section."

It is just coincidence that Wolfman would write *TOMB OF DRACULA* for Marvel, or that his protege Steve Gerber would set *HOWARD THE DUCK* in Cleveland? Dube later told me that Wolfman left Warren abruptly and not on the finest of terms. That spring, when one of the early *EERIE* series bore the title "Marvin the Dead Thing" a Warren press release characterized Wolfman as irked by the news. However, when Wolfman recycled *THE NIGHT STALKER* in *TOMB OF DRACULA* he named his "Night Staker" a Boston reporter named Paul Butterworth, and I thought it was great. It's another humorous career footnote.

© 1973 Eerie # 48 Warren Think Of Me And I'll Be There
By Jack Butterworth & Martin Salvador

THEN HER FORCE OF MIND SPREADS EVEN FURTHER... AS THE DEAD BODY OF HARRY RISES... AND PUSHES CLOSER AND CLOSER TOWARDS THE FRIGHTENED GIRL... AND FINALLY THE LAST OF LENA'S LOVE BEGINS TO STIR... AND MOVE...



Skywald's offices to Jeff's new job, president of an animation studio. Although I had not quite mastered the disintegration of time and locale—in fact, I'm still working on it—Jeff now thought my revision was quite acceptable. I sent it back to *Skywald's* new editor, Al Hewetson, who rejected it. It seems that with Jeff's departure, the magazines were now staff-written.

Believe it or not, it gets worse. Possibly as an aid to my career, Jeff Rovin had included a reference to me in a *NIGHTMARE* fan column, an honor he said few fans receive "and, it seems to me, even fewer 30-year-olds. John Cochran saw my name there and immediately sent me a letter, informing me that I had to make a choice between Warren and *Skywald*. My reaction to this could be summed up in a single sound: huh? However, he was dead serious. I tried to explain that in other genres, rejects from Company A are routinely sent off to Company B. That was a mistake, even though I told him I would send everything I wrote to Warren first. His response to that was several degrees colder. In fact, he sent back a fourth or fifth rewrite of "Spare That Tree" and told me he did not want to see it again.



© 1973 Creepy #57 Warren-Marvin

I reread a copy Cochran sent me of a three-page letter Jim Warren had written back when his first all-new black-and-white horror magazine competition, *WEB OF HORROR*, first hit the stands and its publisher, Robert Sproul, who also did *CRACKED*, apparently tried to recruit some Warren talent. Warren, a man whose emotions could run to extremes, was incensed when he wrote this one. His sense of honor had been violated. He said he was proud that in 12 years of publishing Warren had never produced a periodical that did not create an absolutely new field on the newsstands. He called his imitators "shoddy duplicates" and demanded that his talent not enrich the competition. He also promised to give the faithful all the work they could handle, hinting that he planned to bring out a new book soon. He also hammered away at a catch-phrase, "original creativity," his doctrine that "Creativity begins in the mind of a single man."

Warren was fair enough to disregard staff contributions to color comics and concentrate on magazines in his format. It's interesting to note that when *WEB* made its debut, there were three Warren books on the stands and seven more black-and-white reprint magazines already chowing down on the fan's comic book budget, which probably led to *WEB's* quick demise. It's also interesting that at the same time I was going through all this Tom Sutton was drawing for both Warren and *Skywald*—his *Skywald* work was done under a pseudonym, a compromise which apparently kept everyone happy. Well, Warren was taking the time to help me develop as a writer and *Skywald* wasn't. There was no sense fighting for the honor of a woman who had rejected you, was there? I guess I learned something from watching all those *MAVERICK* episodes after all. I pledged allegiance to the house of Warren and included another rewrite of "Spare That Tree." This

time Cochran liked it. Just a couple of things to clear up, and he'd buy it.

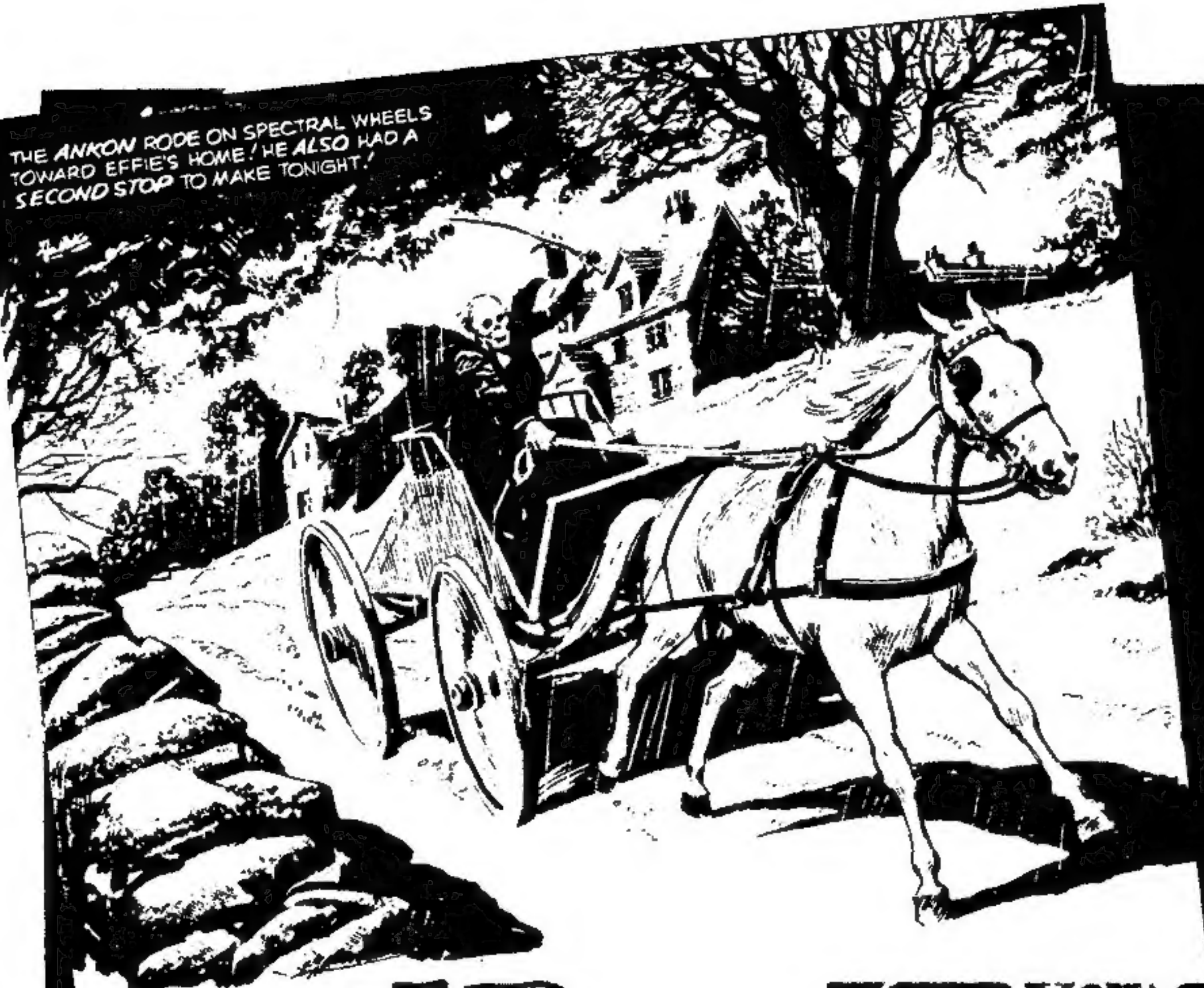
Just to add the final touch of irony, I rewrote the script and sent it back only to find that Marv Wolfman had now replaced Cochran as editor. (Cochran, who went out in a blaze of glory with two great scripts illustrated by Tom Sutton, became a newspaper reporter in Western Massachusetts.) Wolfman sent it back to me, noting that he liked the script a lot until he noticed that Cochran had worked on it, and now he wanted more revisions. Those were the last, however, and his letter telling me it was accepted included the note, "Congrats. It's been a long birth." It was Wolfman who finally clued me in on submitting a plot outline instead of a script. After "Spare That Tree," which could just as easily have been titled, "Spare That Writer," I was ready to concede that it was easier to do.

One of the stories that benefitted from Wolfman's midwifing was "Dead Man's Race," (*CREEPY* 54) a period piece that practically plotted itself after I read about the superstition of the ankon, the spirit of the last person buried in a graveyard who must ride out to visit the next person to die. I used it as a vehicle for a study of class struggles, with the rich family and the poor family racing each other to the nearly-filled cemetery so that their dead relatives wouldn't have to be an ankon forever. It was Wolfman who stressed the need for a dark mood. Somehow the story and the finished artwork by Martin Salvador came to the attention of Stephen King, who was compiling an article on writing horror stories and was just radical enough to include advice on comic book writing as an option. When the article was published in *WRITER'S DIGEST* in 1973 it carried a mention of myself and Salvador, calling the story a prime example of "how good the form can be when it's working." The appearance of the article took me by surprise. Jeff Perrin, an old Marine Corps friend trying to break in as a freelance writer, called me long distance one night from Texas, practically shouting that my name was in print. By that time, Wolfman was gone and when I thanked Bill DuBay profusely for the mention his first reaction was, "I wish he hadn't done that." After all, Dube got a very appreciative call from me but he probably received a lot more calls from other writers asking why he hadn't mentioned them too. I grabbed two or three copies of the issue for posterity. It wasn't until six years later that I came across them in the attic and got the jolt of my life realizing WHO had written the article.

Dube was the third editor I worked with and by this time I was beginning to think of Warren's editorial office as a revolving door—an uncomfortable feeling for a freelancer who lives by the ability to ingratiate himself or herself with an editor's quirks—but he turned out to be the one who lasted. Since he happened to be the last Warren editor and took a lot of the bad rap for things that happened at the company's demise, let me tell you a few of the GOOD things about him. Dube was a good artist who never gave himself a chance to develop his talent due to his many other commitments. As a writer he was Warren's best. His "Butcher" series in *EERIE* dealt with a priest turned Thirties' avenger. It was one of the strongest concepts that Warren ever published, handled with restraint considering the break-neck pace of the action. Rich Corben's color artwork was gritty in its interpretation of the story, which rose above its pulp origins. It took guts to write this one. In another color script for Corben, "Bless U's Father" (*CREEPY* 59) Dube used an interesting writing trick lifted from films as counterpoint to Corben's visuals. What we see in the story is an escaped mental patient in a Santa Claus suit who kills a woman with a meat cleaver on Christmas Eve, then goes after a little girl in an alley. A police officer shoots the killer, but not before the killer fatally wounds him. However, the story begins with two different families having a conversation: the killer's parents, who haven't seen him since they sent him off to the hospital, and the officer's estranged wife and little girl, who wonder if he will call them tonight. Dube shows the action without any dialogue from the main characters, intercutting narration blocks which quote from the family conversations instead. It's a beautiful ironic device and one which went largely unused in comics until the recent advent of Alan Moore in *SWAMP THING*. Those of us who faithfully read Warren books during this period have a lot of admiration for Moore, but I'd like to mention, "That we saw that writing trick in Warren first," courtesy of Bill DuBay.

As an editor, Dube combined the carrot and the stick very well. He was a good cheerleader for the creative people who worked for him, telling them when they did a good job, sending out tearsheets and memos. He also let them know when they let him down—there was a period when his

THE ANKON RODE ON SPECTRAL WHEELS
TOWARD EFFIE'S HOME! HE ALSO HAD A
SECOND STOP TO MAKE TONIGHT!



DEAD MAN'S RACE

© 1973 Creepy #54 Dead Man's Race
by Jack Butterworth & Martin Salvador



conversation was peppered with the angry promise, "I'm going to kick him in the balls when I see him!" However, as far as I know, nobody ever left Dube's office a soprano. His bark was worse than his bit. It's a good thing. His bark could be pretty bad, even though I usually got off light. I recall a letter he wrote describing several plots I sent him. One of them dealt with a man who was made of cotton candy who was goaded into going for a swim by his girlfriend—his sweetie, of course—and melted. Go ahead, steal it. I dare you. I only wish I'd sent it off to *PLOP!*, the DC horror-humor magazine, where it might have found a home. Dube's reaction to these story ideas was to inform me that he had read them all before elsewhere. Except for one. Typewriter ribbon dripping with sarcasm, he told me he had never read a story about a man made of cotton candy before. He then finished the letter off with a reminder about my job as a newspaper reporter, which he believed put me in a position to write real, contemporary horror stories like my "*Top to Bottom*," which he called great Seventies horror.

The best thing about Dube as editor during this period was his ownership of his career. He had a good working relationship with Jim Warren, not the easiest thing to achieve, and he gave the impression of a man making his own decisions. That can be crucial for an editor. A friend who worked at Marvel described an editor—later purged by Jim Shooter—telling him, "I think I like your work, but I'll let you know for sure after I show it to Stan." For comparison, my friend told me about Archie Goodwin, who even before *Epic* would look at something and buy it. That's the difference between an editor who has a mutual dialogue with the boss and one who doesn't. The one who doesn't like the outcome he simply says, "Sorry, I won't do it again."

Dube's concept of the Warren books was a Seventies approach to horror paralleling that of EC comics to the Fifties, but beyond that it could be hard to pin down. I tried gruesome plots that Dube put down as too violent, and at least one humor plot that he used and regretted because it was too light-weight: "*The Wizard*" (*EERIE* 56). My approach to series was one of the Warren hard-luck stories of 1973. Dube encouraged me to submit series concepts. I responded with a proposal for a series about Edgar Allen Poe, predicated on the idea that Poe really fought with monsters and outwitted them. Dube rejected the concept, feeling that it would debase the character and what we really ought to do was clue "the little farts" in on the tragedy of Poe's life, his drinking, drug involvement and unhappy love life. He urged me to think in terms of vampires, werewolves and mummies, the series currently running in *EERIE* in 1973, the characters that Warren had made a buck from all along.

At his urging, I wrote a script for the first episode of a series entitled, "It" based on a Tom Sutton story about a corpse that comes back to life to wander around its former home. Dube wrote back. He loved the script, but . . . somehow he had assigned the series to two writers and Carl Wessler had already turned in his first three "It" scripts. I tried plots for a western character named "Coffin" and got buried. I sent in an outline on "*Voodoo Papa Grenoville*" which was apparently hexed from the start. Finally, I had a plot outline on two characters who were Celtic gods witnessing the strife in modern-day Ireland, called "*The Immortals*." Assistant editor, Jeff Rovin liked it but it got sidetracked.

Carl Wessler was a standout on the list of writers Bill DuBay chose for his permanent writing staff at Warren. Dube proudly told us all in the letter describing the staff members in October, 1973 that Wessler had written some of his favorite EC stories. It was hard to believe for many of us hardcore Al Feldstein fans, but that letter marked the 20th anniversary of Wessler's hiring at EC. It was even harder to believe when Wessler left the staff two months later, irked by something Dube wrote in a letter sent to all staff members.

Carl was 60, a Floridian who had been writing scripts for comics for 30 years. Since he still earned a living by writing, he was placed on Dube's backup staff where he was expected to produce a lot of scripts and fill up the books. Dube's open memo November 30, written in hopes of generating staff unity, contained personal notes to us all. He called Wessler to task for inserting "sex and screwing in instances where they actually detract from the story line." He said he deleted eight pages from four of Wessler's scripts by chopping sex scenes. He even criticized Wessler's use of past and present tense in the same story.

At that time, by his count, Dube had 40 Wessler scripts in his inventory. Most of them were never to see print. Wessler's reaction to the memo was to sever his relationship with Warren and demand the return of all unassigned scripts. Gerry Boudreau later told me that Wessler did not think Dube was fair in criticizing him in front of his peers. In all fairness to Dube, that was his way. In a stressful job, Dube did not have stress. He was a carrier. He vented the stress on the people who created it for him and got it out of his system.

It's interesting to note another sidelight to Wessler's brief Warren career. The writer cited by fans for his wealth of original ideas at EC 20 years earlier recycled an EC plot for one of his Warren scripts. "Lucky Stiff," (VAMPIRELLA 38), credited to Boudreau and Wessler, is a rewrite of "Out Cold" (HAUNT OF FEAR 25), a story in which an office flirtation almost leads to the hero being fed to cats—but he is saved by dying an easier way. In the Warren version, the hero is chosen to die because he is sexually passive, a somewhat hollow tip of the hat to the sexual revolution. Boudreau at this time as assistant editor to Archie Goodwin, a longtime EC fan. It looks like Goodwin discovered the rewrite and had Boudreau revise the script to make it look less like the original. The odd length of the story—five pages—may mean the DuBay cut out a sex scene. This could be called triple bypass script surgery.

If this is true, it isn't meant to detract from Wessler's glory days at EC, which were more glorious than those of most comic book writers. Plot switches like that are a common practice in any cannibalistic form of commercial entertainment, whether it be television or comics, and there is a fine line as to how much a writer might change an old idea in making the switch. The sad thing to me is, what were those other Wessler stories about? If there were new ideas there—or even unpublished EC scripts, they represent a loss to the comic book field.

© 1974 Vampirella #38 Warren-

Lucky Stiff



HARRY NADA PROMISED HIMSELF HE WOULDN'T GLANCE NOW AND THEN, BUT HE WOULDN'T STARE THE WAY THOSE OTHER VULTURES DID. IT ALMOST MADE HARRY ASHAMED TO BE A MALE. HOW THEY COULD BE SO BLATANT, SO COARSE ABOUT THEIR UGLY, LONGING WAS BEYOND HIS COMPREHENSION.



"IS THAT THE NEW PINK CLERK? SHE DOESN'T LOOK STRONG ENOUGH TO OPEN THE DRAWERS!"

"THAT'S NOT BEING FAIR, WARD. I'M SURE SHE'S BEEN IN A LOT OF DRAWERS IN HER TIME."

HER NAME WAS LINDA CRAYVEN. THAT WAS ALL HARRY KNEW. BY 9:05 A.M., THE OTHER MEN HAD FOUND OUT HER ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER AND VITAL STATISTICS. BUT HARRY WAS CONTENT JUST KNOWING HER NAME.

AT LEAST HE TOLD HIMSELF HE WAS CONTENT.

SOON, EVERYONE IN THE OFFICE HAD LEFT... EVERYONE, THAT IS, EXCEPT WILMA AND RALPH. HIS HEART POUNDED WITH EXCITEMENT. WHAT, SINCE THAT MORNING, HAD BEEN MERELY A VAGUE DREAM, THEN A FAINT HOPE, WAS NOW A THRILLING CERTAINTY...



SHE'S STALLING... PURPOSELY... WAITING FOR ME. WILMA WANTS TO KNOW ME AS BADLY AS I WANT TO KNOW HER! WELL, WHY NOT? I'LL OFFER TO DRIVE HER HOME... ASK HER FOR A DATE... AND...



MAYBE I'M WRONG, BUT I'M SURE SHE'S GIVING ME THE EYE!

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

'AIRY TALES.' WHAT NEXT? PRETTY SOON THAT OLD HAG WILL BE TELLIN' 'FUNNY-LITTLE-ANIMAL' STORIES! WELL, NOT ME. I'M FROM THE OLD SCHOOL! STRAIGHT BORE... THAT'S MY LORE! YEP! CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO DIG UP ANOTHER TALE OF TERROR FROM MY COLLECTION! SO ON THAT SAMPLE-CASE, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURLER I CALL...

DEATH OF SOME SALESMEN!



YOUR NAME IS *STUART THATCHER*. YOU'RE A SALESMAN... A *TRAVELING SALESMAN*! FOR TWO YEARS NOW YOU'VE BEEN DRIVING THESE BACKWOODS ROADS, HUSTLING YOUR LINE! YOU GO FROM FARMHOUSE TO FARMHOUSE, MAKING YOUR PITCH! SOMETIMES YOU HAWK A *SALE*... MOSTLY *NOT*! TODAY LOOKS LIKE ONE OF YOUR *BAD* DAYS...

NO! NO, I SAID! NOW SCRAM!

WELL, THANKS ANYWAY! I'LL DROP BY AGAIN!

EC and Me. In 1972 I dipped back into my childhood and did some serious thinking about the EC horror stories I remembered. I was interested in writing socially relevant stories and it seemed to me that the EC plots about weak characters who struck back at the strong characters who tormented them were a perfect model for stories about society, people who struck back at their oppressors. "The Bloodlock Museum" (CREEPY 57) is grounded in an Al Feldstein script, "Death of Some Salesmen" (HAUNT OF FEAR 15). In the EC story an old farm couple kill a group of salesmen, using their products. In my story, an old farm couple kill a group of people who have tormented them in society, the last one being the recruiter who signed their son up for Vietnam. I conscientiously haunted dealers rooms for that comic, rereading it to make sure that I didn't take anything from the story but the basic concept, making certain that the situations and the words were mine. They are.

"Firetrap" began as a story about a landlord left to die by the tenants in his run-down building, but Bill DuBay saw its potential differently. He wanted a script that would reflect the EC classic "Blind Alleys," from the final issue of TALES FROM THE CRYPT. At his urging, I revised to have the tenants band together and kill the landlord, netting him into a box where he was eaten alive by rats, then set afire. Technically, it was my most polished script at that time. Dube sent it to Alex Toth, who sent it back (too violent?) and the artwork was lovingly done by Vincente Alcazar. My favorite page was the one where the landlord calls his black chauffeur "boy" and the chauffeur, galvanized by the insult, releases the woman who tried to stab the landlord, sticks a note saying "I quit." Under the windshield wiper of the landlord's limousine and walks away, leaving her to do her worst. Perhaps it was overdone—none of my bellweather friends liked it and my wife hated it—but it did get out some of my anger at social injustice.

In retrospect, though, "Top to Bottom" (VAMPIRELLA 33) made a more subtle social point than either of these. The way the man becomes addicted to playing the game, even though he alters society every time he plays, and the way the drug user ends up with the game, strongly underlined a good moral: drug use, even by one person, has the power to alter society for the worse. That story came to me in one sitting, lying on my living room floor one afternoon and thinking about "Rubik's Cube," an addicting little game.

"Death Of Some Salesmen"

Haunt Of Fear

#15 © 1952

Fables Pub. Co.



YOU PULL DOWN THE OVEN DOOR... JUST A CRACK! YOU STEP BACK HORRIFIED! THE DOOR FALLS OPEN ALL THE WAY! INSIDE IS A BROWN-CRUSTED WELL-ROASTED CORPSE...

STOVE WORKED GOOD, TOO! SEE!

DON'T GET ANY IDEAS ABOUT *RUNNIN'*, MR. THATCHER! THIS *SHOT-GUN'S* LOADED...



© 1973 Creepy #57 Warren
Bloodlock Museum
by Jack Butterworth & Martin Salvador

The Warren Artists. Of the fifteen artists listed on the Warren specifications chart, ten were Spanish. They ranged from Estaban Maroto, whose metier was fantasy, to the prosaic naturalistic Martin Salvador. Some like Fernando Fernandez, wrote their own stories which had to be translated into English, usually by script doctor Gerry Boudreau who found their symbolism difficult to decipher. To Jim Warren, orienting the books toward monsters and beautiful women, the Spanish artists were a gold mine. Most could draw exceptional women.

A thumbnail description of Jose Gonzalez is a good example. "Fully tied up" on the *VAMPIRELLA* series at this time. A good all around artist, but temperamental as hell. Needs strong script to pull good art out of him or he'll fall down. A strong script to Jose: Girls, girls, girls and a monster." That was what Gonzalez got month after month from *VAMPIRELLA* scripter Flaxman Loew, who was actually a moonlighting New Wave British science fiction writer named Michael Butterworth. (No relation).

Maroto was the best of the Spanish group. His ability to draw fantasy stories was exceptional and he seemed driven to experiment with page layout. He left Warren briefly for Marvel, found them even less willing to spell artist with a capital "A" and returned to Warren. Like many of the Spaniards, he preferred five-panel pages to the conventional American six or more.

The Americans who made themselves available for occasional work included Neal Adams, Russ Heath, Jeff Jones, Alex Toth. Only Toth would do a sizeable amount of work. Carmine Infantino came in later, after being unceremoniously dropped by DC. The one American whose work appeared in the Warren books regularly at this time, other than Rich Corben, was Tom Sutton.

Bill DuBay was enthusiastic about Tom's work. To Dube, Sutton was an anything guy who always came through in a pinch. He might lack the kind of fashion-artist beauty of the Spanish artists but he could put a lot of punch into a story if given a free hand. Writers slanting a script toward Sutton were asked to avoid girls and, at his request, New York City.

Archie Goodwin was welcomed back to Warren in January, 1974, with a fanfare belittling a successful comic book writer. As scripter of the *SECRET AGENT CORRIGAN* comic strip with Al Williamson, and the DC editor who brought back *MANHUNTER* and developed *Walt Simonson* into a major talent in doing so, he deserved the applause. His swift departure and his subsequent success at Marvel came as no surprise.

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! AND NOW THAT Y. K. HAS GURDLED YOUR ANEMIC BLOOD, IT'S TIME FOR YOUR HOST IN THE CRYPT OF TERROR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER... NAMELY, ME... TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH A SPINE-TINGLING, NAUSEATING NOVELETTE FROM MY CREEP COLLECTION. LET'S SEE! OH... LET'S NOT SEE! YES! THIS IS A GOOD GORY ONE! IT'S CALLED...

BLIND ALLEYS

THE "HOME" WAS OLD AND PAINT-STARVED AND DRAFTY AND BADLY IN NEED OF REPAIR. THE ROOF LEAKED AND THE WINDOWS RATTLED AND WERE COVERED WITH YEARS OF DUST AND GRIME. THE INMATES OF THE HOME WALKED GRIM-FACED AND SILENT THROUGH CRACKED PLASTER HALLS, OR SAT IN DINGY ROOMS ON CRAWLING BEDS, THEY SHIVERED IN THE COLD WHEN WINTER CAME... WHEN THERE WAS NO STEAM TO WARM THE RUSTED RADIATORS...



...AND THEY SWELTERED IN THE HEAT WHEN SUMMER BURNED... WHEN LONG-BROKEN FANS LAY IDLE AND UNREPAIRED AND UNABLE TO WAFT A BREATH OF COOLING RELIEF...



"Blind Alleys" Tales From The Crypt
#46 © 1955 I.C. Publishing

BETTER GET THE RENTS FAST! HAVE TO BE AT THE CLUB MEETING AT NOON!

MUST WASH THE FILTH FROM THIS PLACE OFF MY HANDS WHEN I'M DONE! WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE IF THE DAMN SUPERINTENDENT HADN'T QUIT ON ME!

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS, FIENDS! I'VE GOT A COUPLE AROUND... BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO PUT MY FINGER ON THEM! SEEMS I'VE FORGOTTEN... WHAT CHEST I'VE PUT THEM INTO! SINCE I CAN'T SHOW YOU A HEART, HERE'S A HOME, AND A NASTY LAND-LORD! HOPE HIS TENANTS HAVE A HEART! OF COURSE, IF THEY DON'T, IT MAKES A BETTER STORY...

© 1974 Creepy #62 Warren Firetrap
by Jack Butterworth & Vincente Alcazar

BRUTUS! THEY'VE GOT YOU TOO!

© 1974 Creepy #62 Warren-Firetrap
by Jack Butterworth & Vincente Alcazar



"Blind Alleys" Tales From The Crypt
#46 © 1955 I.C. Publishing



AND YET, I WONDERED... WAS IT MY FATHER'S LOVE OR MY FATHER'S HATRED THAT KILLED BYRON?



© 1974 Vampirella #38 Warren Gypsy Curse, by Gerry Boudreau and Carl Wessler, art by Esteban Maroto

I'M CONFUSED, LOPEZ! I THOUGHT ONLY SUNLIGHT OR A STAKE THROUGH THE HEART COULD KILL A VAMPIRE! WHAT IS THIS... A NEW WAY TO DO AWAY WITH THE UNDEAD?

YOU ARE RIGHT, SENOR! TOUCH THE SKELETON!

THE ANTS DID THEIR WORK, SENOR! THEY STRIPPED JUAN OF ALL FLESH! BUT THAT WAS ALL THEY COULD DO TO A VAMPIRE!

YAROSLAV DIED WITH A STAKE THROUGH HIS HEART! BUT JUAN STILL LIVES... FOREVER!



© 1973 Creepy #56 Warren, Consumed By Ambition
by Jack Butterworth & Martin Salvador



© 1974 Creepy #62 Warren, Edgar Allan Poe's,
"The Black Cat". Story & Art by Berni Wrightson

My first meeting with Dube was during the 1973 Fourth of July weekend in New York City at the late Phil Seuling's big midsummer convention. It was also my first meeting with Jim Warren. I recall Warren as a force more than I do as a person, an energetic, confrontational man resembling a human steamroller, whether he was expressing charm or anger. My trip to the Big Apple that year was partly out of sympathy, since I had read in the Warren books about the arrest of Phil Seuling, a schoolteacher, in March after a boy allegedly purchased an underground comic at one of Seuling's monthly comic book shows. The boy's parents had complained to a Catholic priest who demanded police action. As a result Seuling and two teenage girls working for him were detained in the Tombs, the infamous New York police holding cells, pending their arraignment. Seuling was the ultimate male teacher figure, a big loud hefty guy with a heart of gold. He was one of the pioneers when it came to organizing comic book shows where fans really could meet professionals, and later on the pioneer in comic book distribution to specialty comic shops. His July shows lasted the whole four-day weekend and attracted a long list of major comic celebrities. The 1973 list included Bob Kane, Bill Gaines and the MAD crew, but the reason Karin and I went was to meet Warren people.

One thing about Warren, he was easy to find. Warren comics had a table in the dealer's room at every July show to promote the books and get some feedback from the thousands of fans attending. We arrived on Saturday, so Warren himself was there. He pumped my hand when I introduced myself, playing the part of a generous host, and told me with an air of unquestionable authority that I was one of his best writers. It was something a publisher can say without requiring total recall, but on the other hand he did not suggest any further revisions in "Spare That Tree." Warren practically ordered us to attend the pro party Saturday night to mingle with the guests and other pros, writing me a little note to use as a pass, which naturally referred to me as one of Warren's best writers, and there I was. At the time I had only five scripts published, one of them out that month and being recognized as a pro gave me that old "Who, me?" feeling. On second thought, once the shock wore off, it was intoxicating. Here I was attending my second major comic book convention ever, and being recognized.

I made sure to ask Warren if Dube was coming by the convention. He

said no, that Dube was busy at the office. Why didn't we go see him there? It was only a subway ride away. That intoxication was permeating every cell of my body. I took a taxi and called Dube from our hotel room and

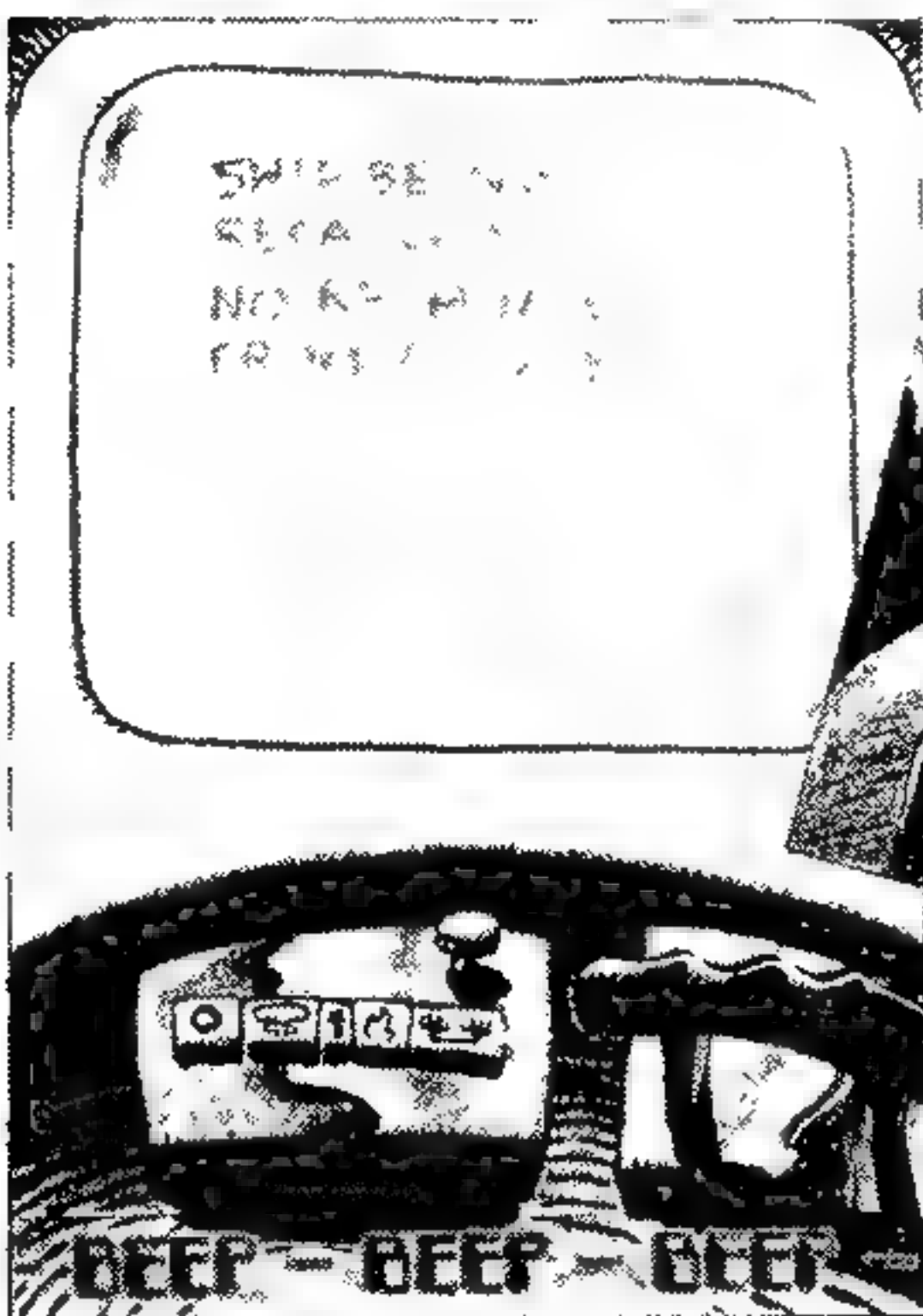
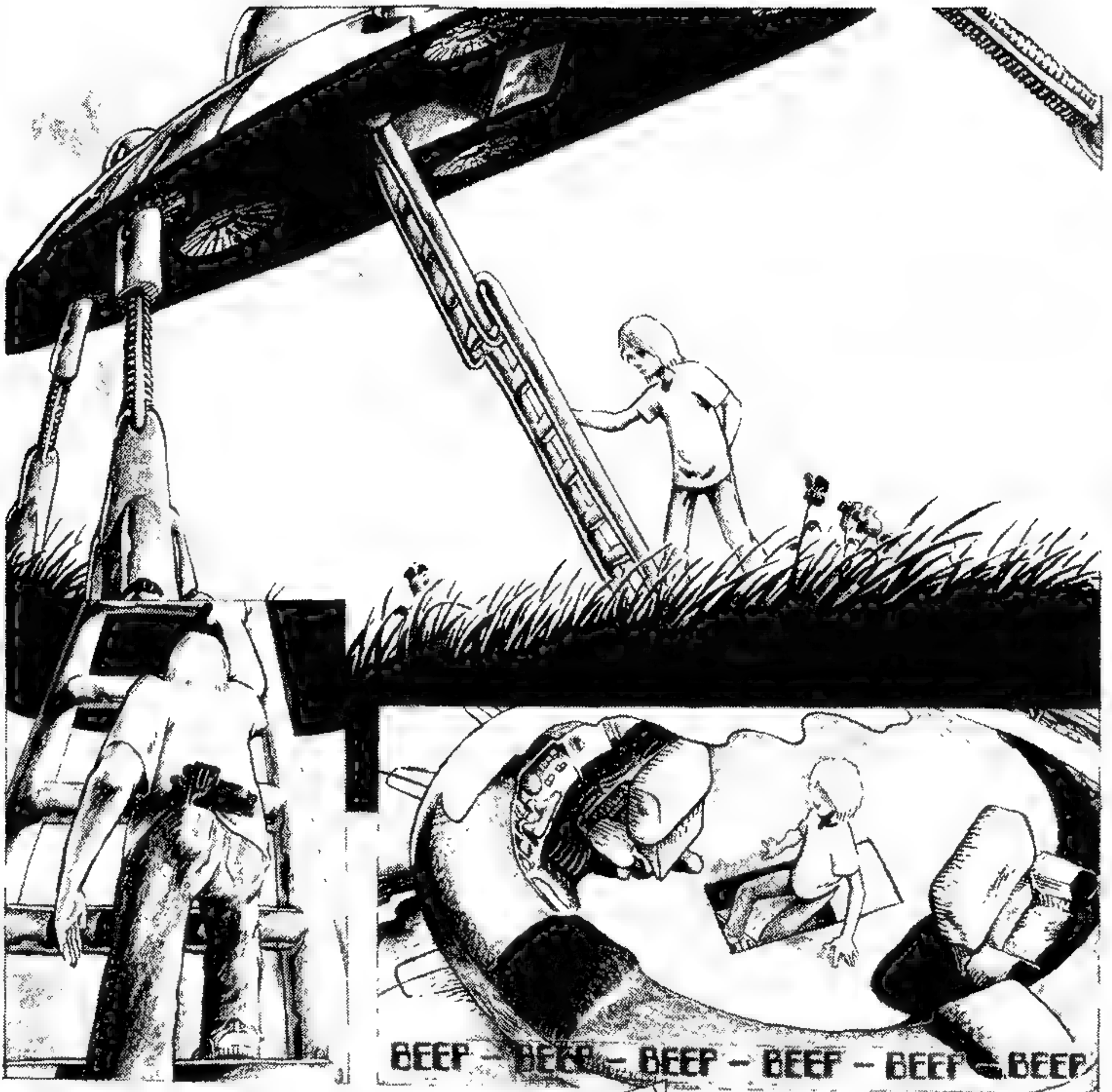
Warren at his word, set off in search of the Warren offices. Dube was not enthusiastic but he treated us both in a friendly way. I told him I had just seen my latest story, "Consumed by Ambition" (CREEPY 56) and he patiently asked if there were any mistakes in it. My negative response reassured him. He dug out the artwork for "The Bloodlock Museum" (CREEPY 59) mentioning that the story was being reduced from six to five pages to avoid having a one-panel splash page, but I would still be paid for six.

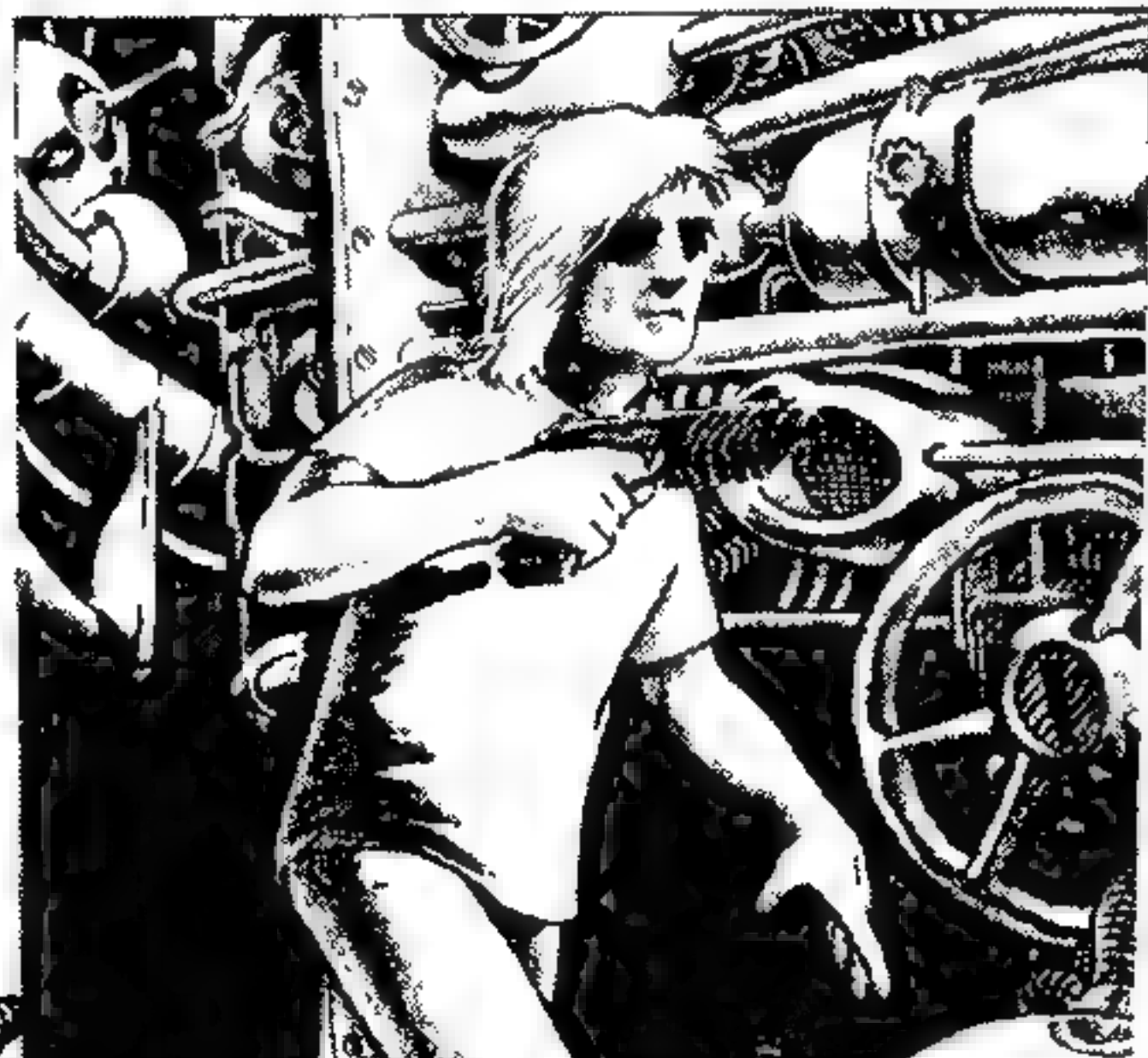
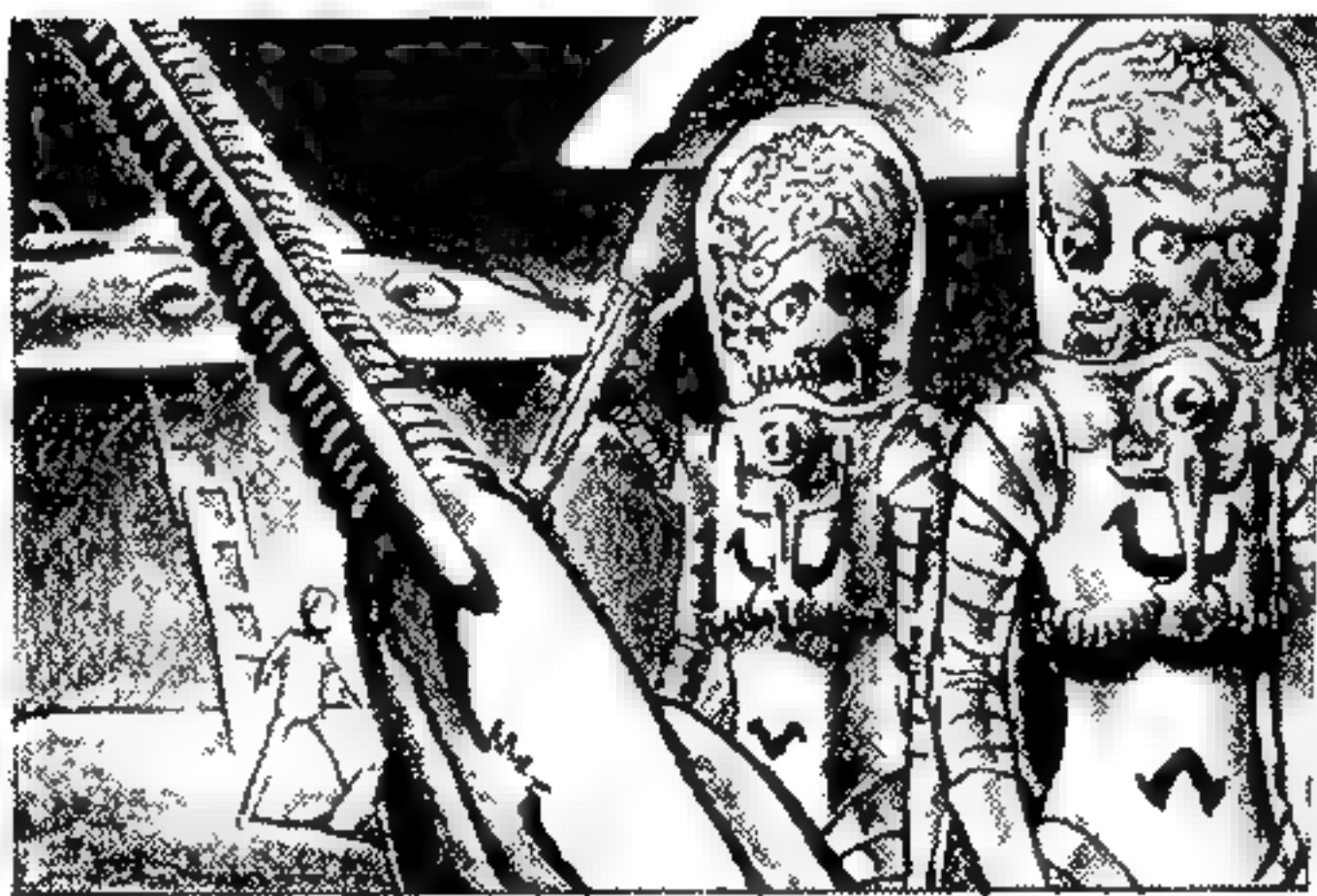
I told him I met Warren and asked what he was like to work with. The patience returned to his voice as he told us the man he had worked under for about two years, including eight months as editor, was okay but... "He doesn't listen." It fit. Dube would later say that he respected Warren for trying to be fair to the staff on pay rates, but even with Dube, whom he liked wholeheartedly, I wonder how much give and take Warren could accept. The two men had a chemistry, but they also seemed to have separate agendas for the magazines. Dube wanted them to be the EC comics of the Seventies. Warren liked to say that the artwork of Rich Corben, his best artist at this time, "could give a corpse an erection." To me it seemed that Warren was the one who favored certain visual elements in the stories: monsters with big claws and women with large breasts, providing the sex-and-violence subtext he expected to sell to the teenage boys he thought of as his principal market. To me those later issues of the Warren books, with so many repetitive scenes, represented Jim Warren's idea of a good comic, not Dube's and not the people who worked to give the books the quality they contained in the early Seventies. Warren was like Pinocchio without a Jimmy Cricket. Bill Gaines and Al Felstein had the same potential for lack of restraint at EC, but their saving grace was their inclination to listen to colorist Marie Severin, whose strong religious upbringing kept them walking an edge they otherwise might have plunged from gleefully.

END OF PART I



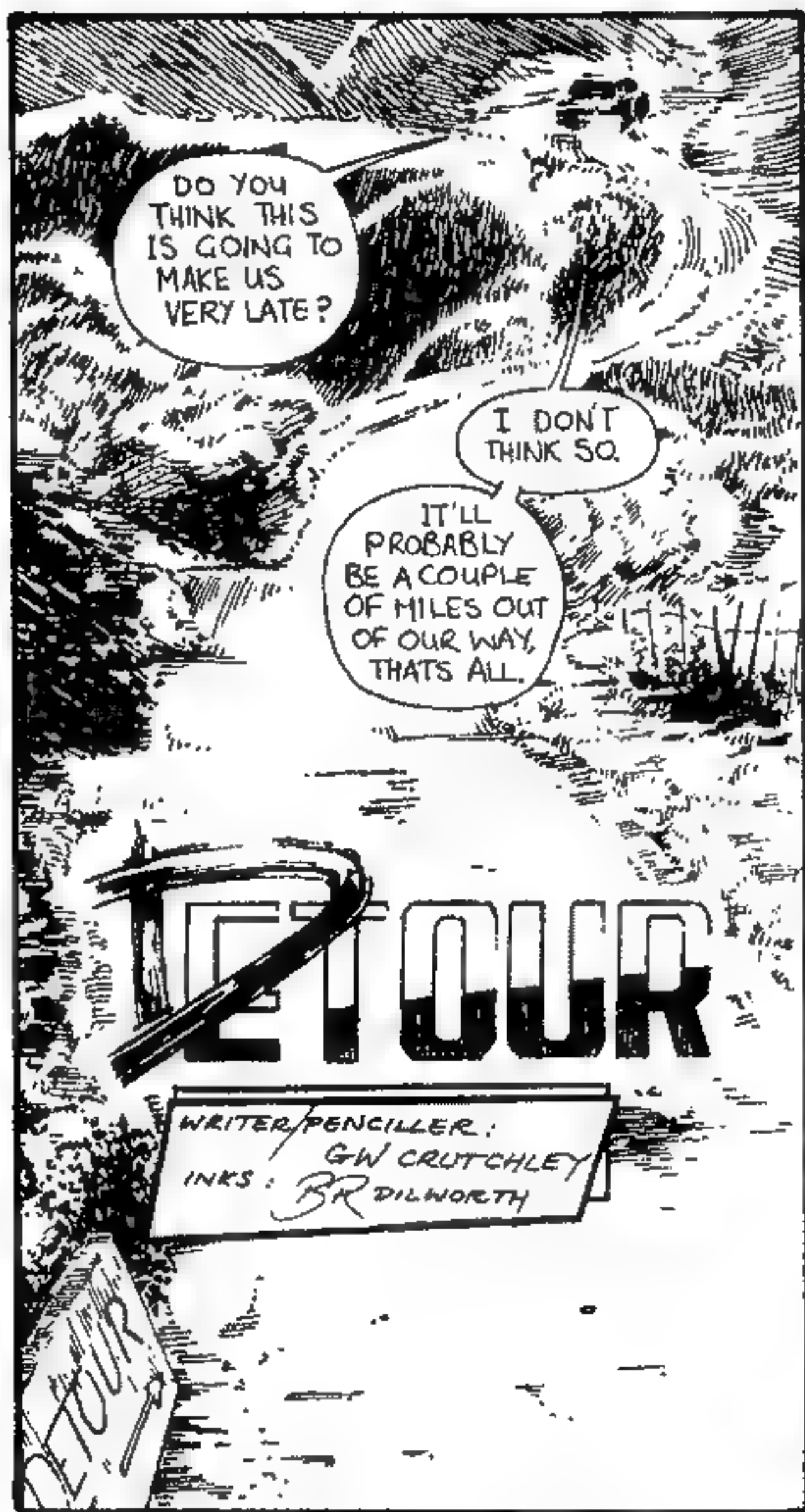














HOT DAMN!!
RIGHT
SMACK BETWEEN
THE EYES...



THAT,
MELVIN,
WAS ONE
PRIME
SHOT!

SHEEIT...
I COULD'VE
DONE IT WITH
MY EYES
SHUT...

AIN'T NOTHING
SPECIAL.
MY DEAD
GRANDMOTHER
COULD'VE
MADE THAT
SHOT.



SHUT UP
DWAYNE
AND HAVE
A LOOK IN
THE BOOT.

WHY IS
IT ALWAYS
HIM THAT
GETS TO
LOOK IN
THE BOOT?

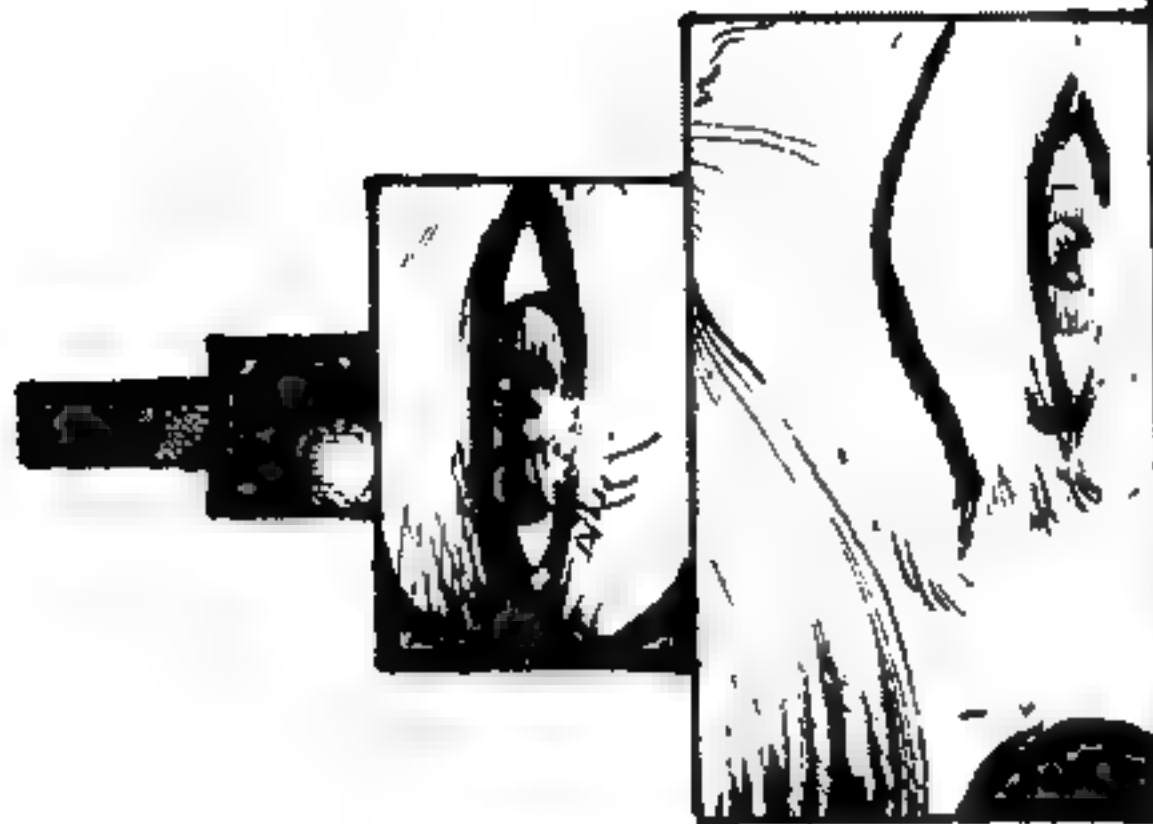
'CAUSE I
AIN'T NO SICK
PERVERT WHO
GETS ALL HOT
AND SWEATY
WHEN HE SEES
SOMEBODY'S
UNDIES.



WELL, LOOKEE
HERE.

AREN'T THESE
THE CUTEST
PAIR OF PANTIES
YOU EVER SEE?

NOT
GETTING ALL
SWEATY ARE
WE MEL-VIN?



"YOU SHUT YOUR MOUTH DWAYNE, THAT AIN'T FUNNY AT ALL."



WHATSAMATTER, NOT GETTIN' ALL EXCITED ARE WE MEL-VIN.



"I'M WARNING YOU DWAYNE IF YOU DON'T SHUT YOUR DAMNED MOUTH"

OH MY GOD... DAVID... NO.



ENJOYING THE SHOW, PRETTY, PRETTY GIRLIE..

COME,... LETS GET A CLOSER LOOK

PLEASE DON'T.



SEE WHAT I'VE FOUND.

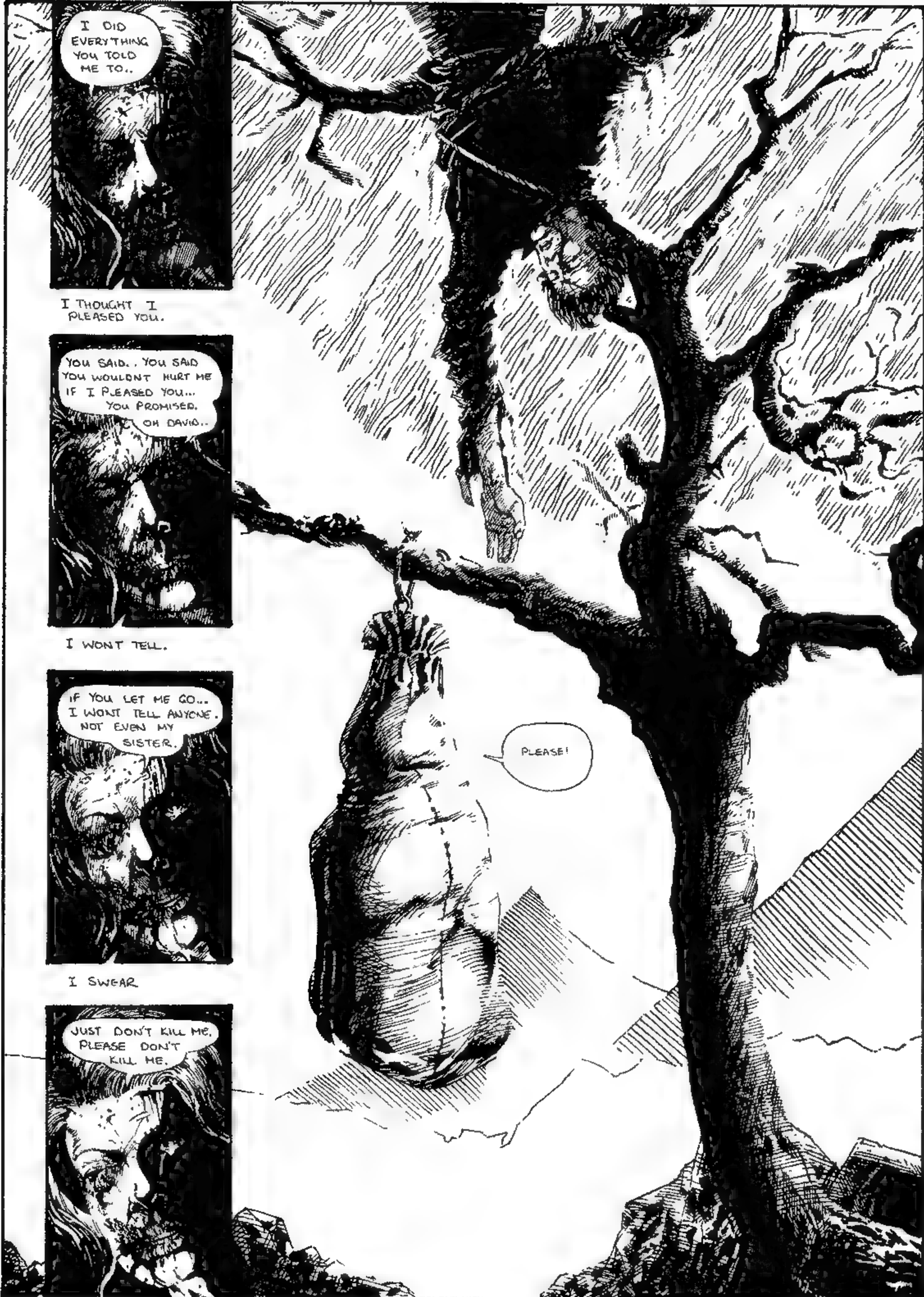
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT A LIVE ONE, THIS TIME, TO PLAY WITH.

PLEASE PLEASE.

GET RID OF THE CAR AND BRING THAT PIECE OF MEAT WITH YOU.

THERE'S FUN TO BE HAD.

GROOVY!



I DID
EVERYTHING
YOU TOLD
ME TO..

I THOUGHT I
PLEASED YOU..

YOU SAID.. YOU SAID
YOU WOULDN'T HURT ME
IF I PLEASED YOU...
YOU PROMISED.
OH DAVID..

I WON'T TELL.

IF YOU LET ME GO...
I WON'T TELL ANYONE.
NOT EVEN MY
SISTER.

I SWEAR

JUST DON'T KILL ME.
PLEASE DON'T
KILL ME.

PLEASE!



END.

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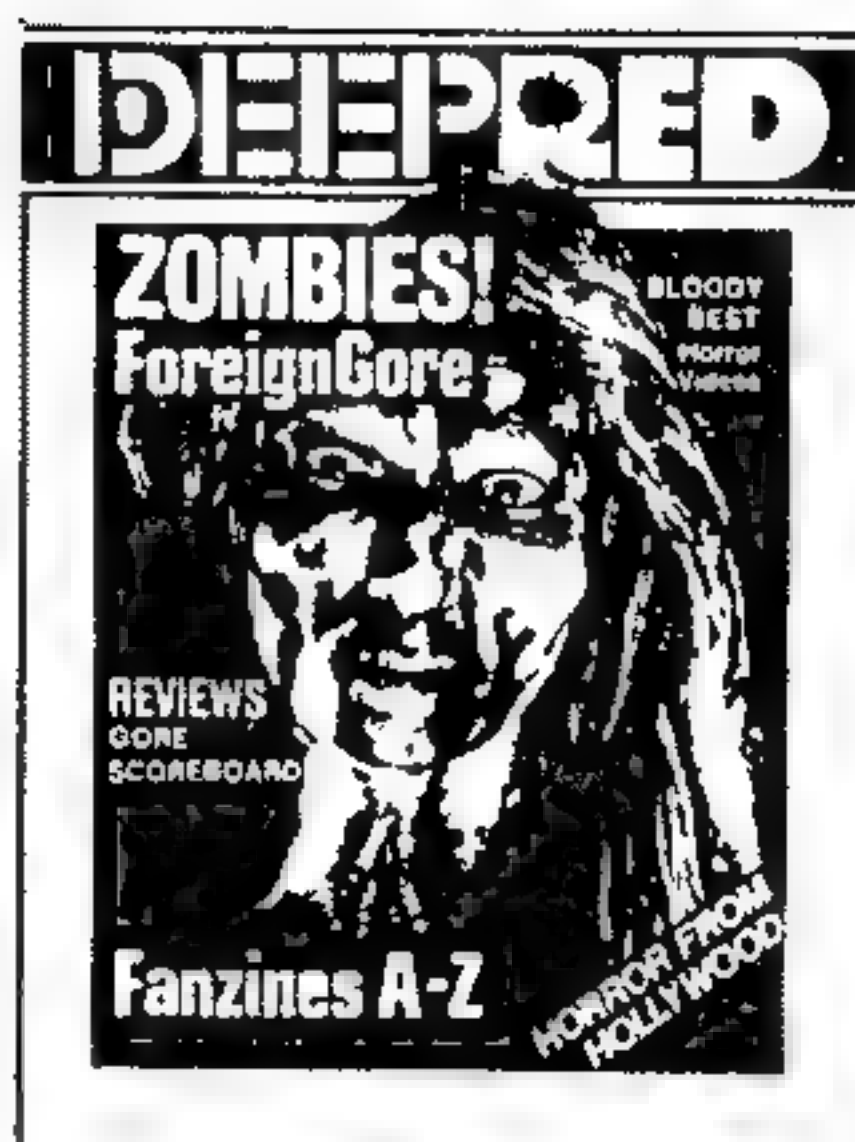
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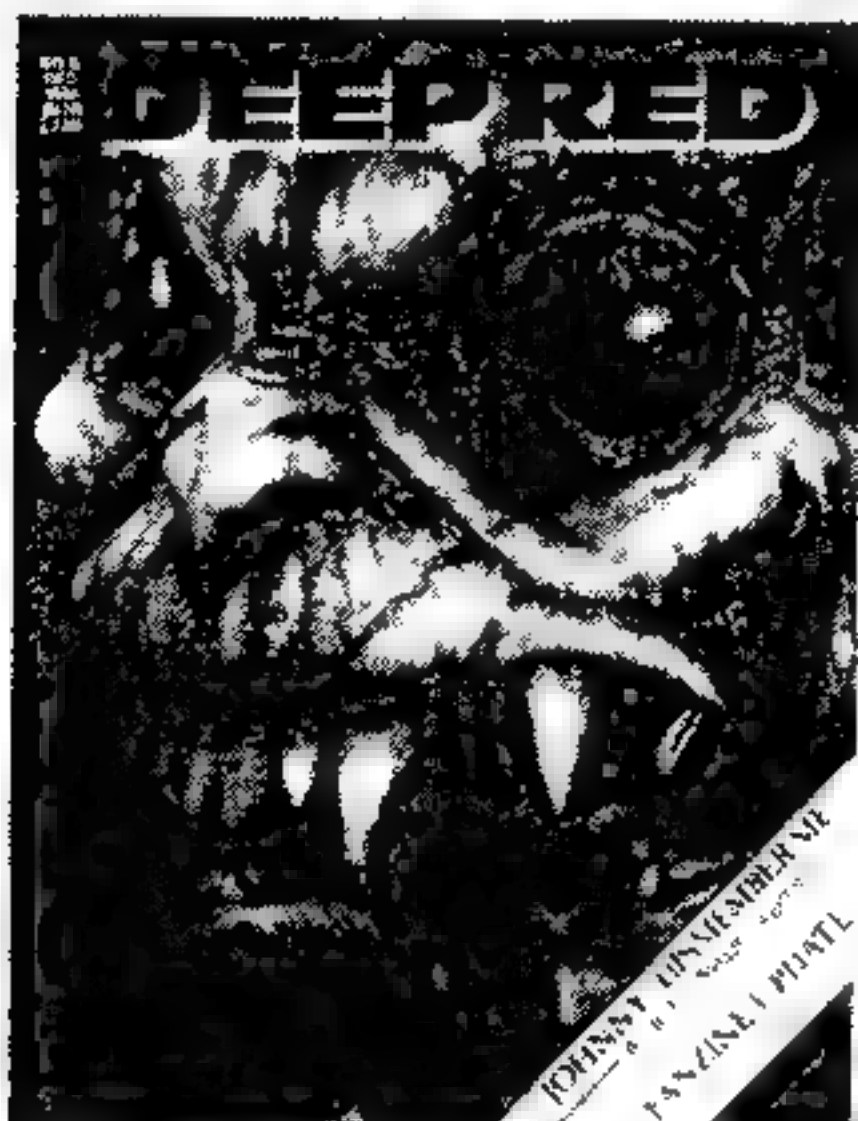
PREMIERE ISSUE! ★ ★ Argento's INFERNO/What Happened to Tobe Hooper?/Interviews with David (LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT) Hess and James (RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD) Karen/Movies with Guts/News Slashes/Fulci's NEW YORK RIPPER/BLOOD DINER/Gore Scoreboard/New FX Artists!



ISSUE 2 - Foreign & Domestic Zombies/HELLRAISER/DOCTOR BUTCHER/Gunnar Hansen's Post-Chainsaw Dating Etiquette/Interview with Mark (EVIL DEAD 2, FROM BEYOND) Shostrom/Fanzines A-Z/Sybil Danning/Video Dog House/Gore Scoreboard!



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Due to the graphic and explicit nature of the material and the strong language used, some readers may be offended. Caution is advised



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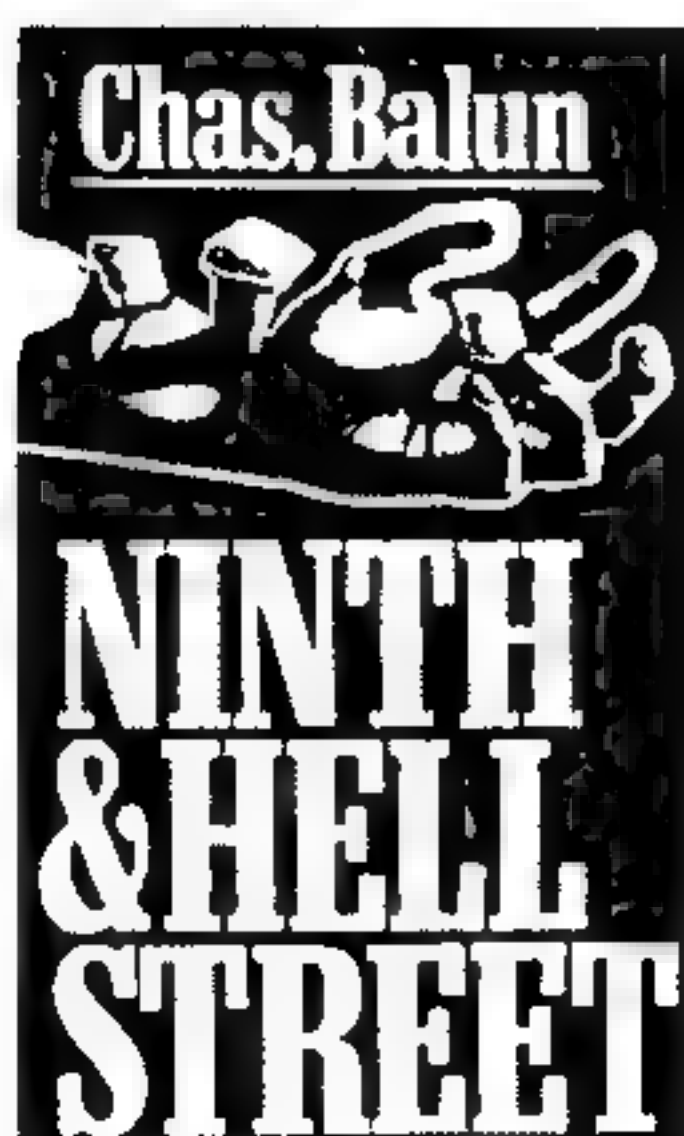
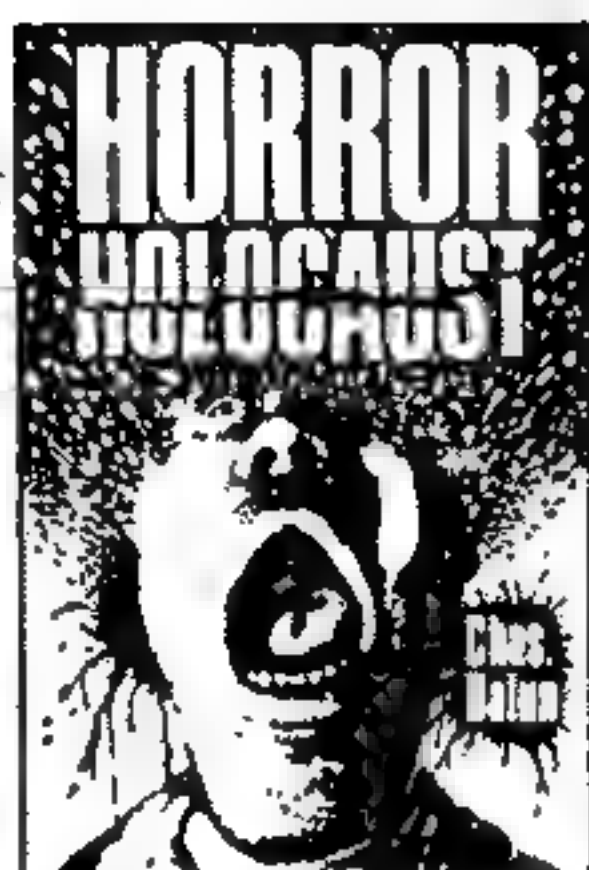
RED ALERT!



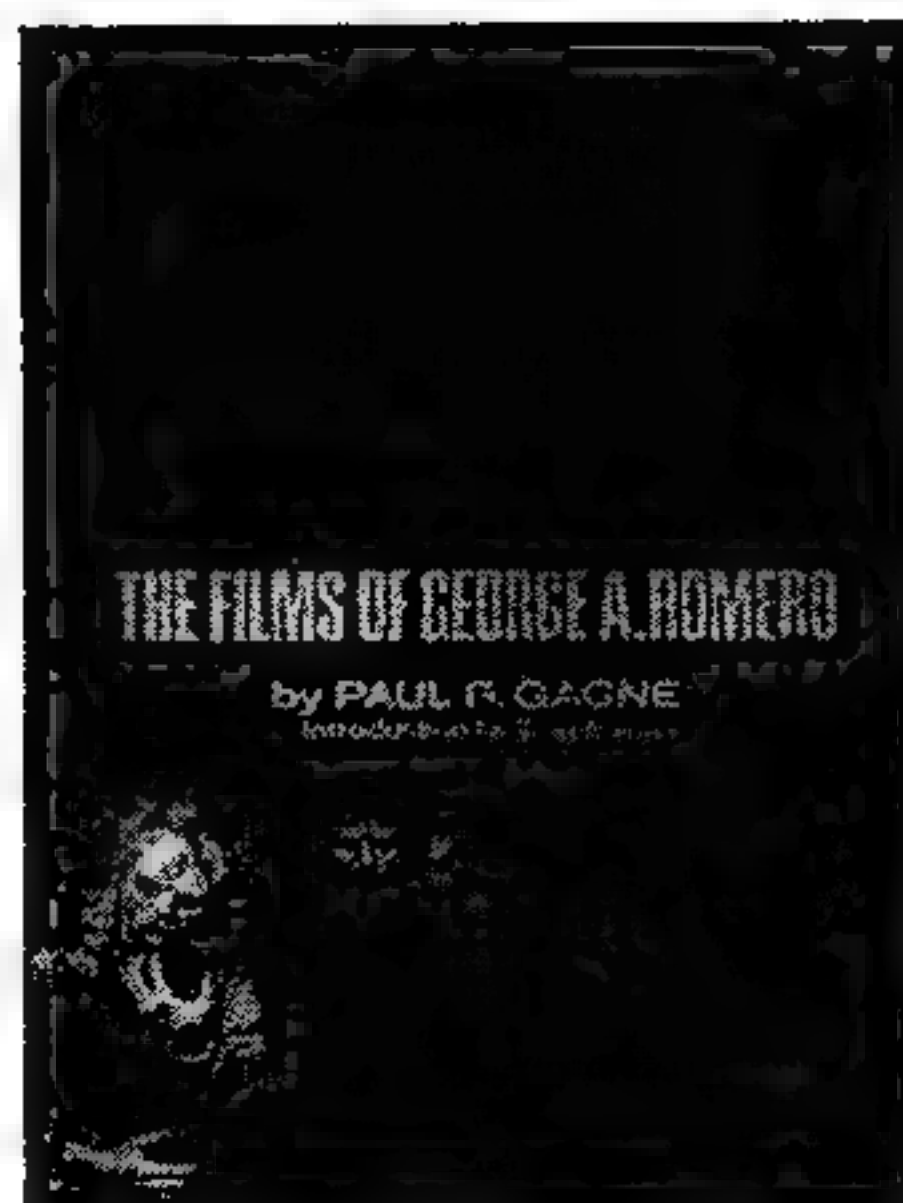
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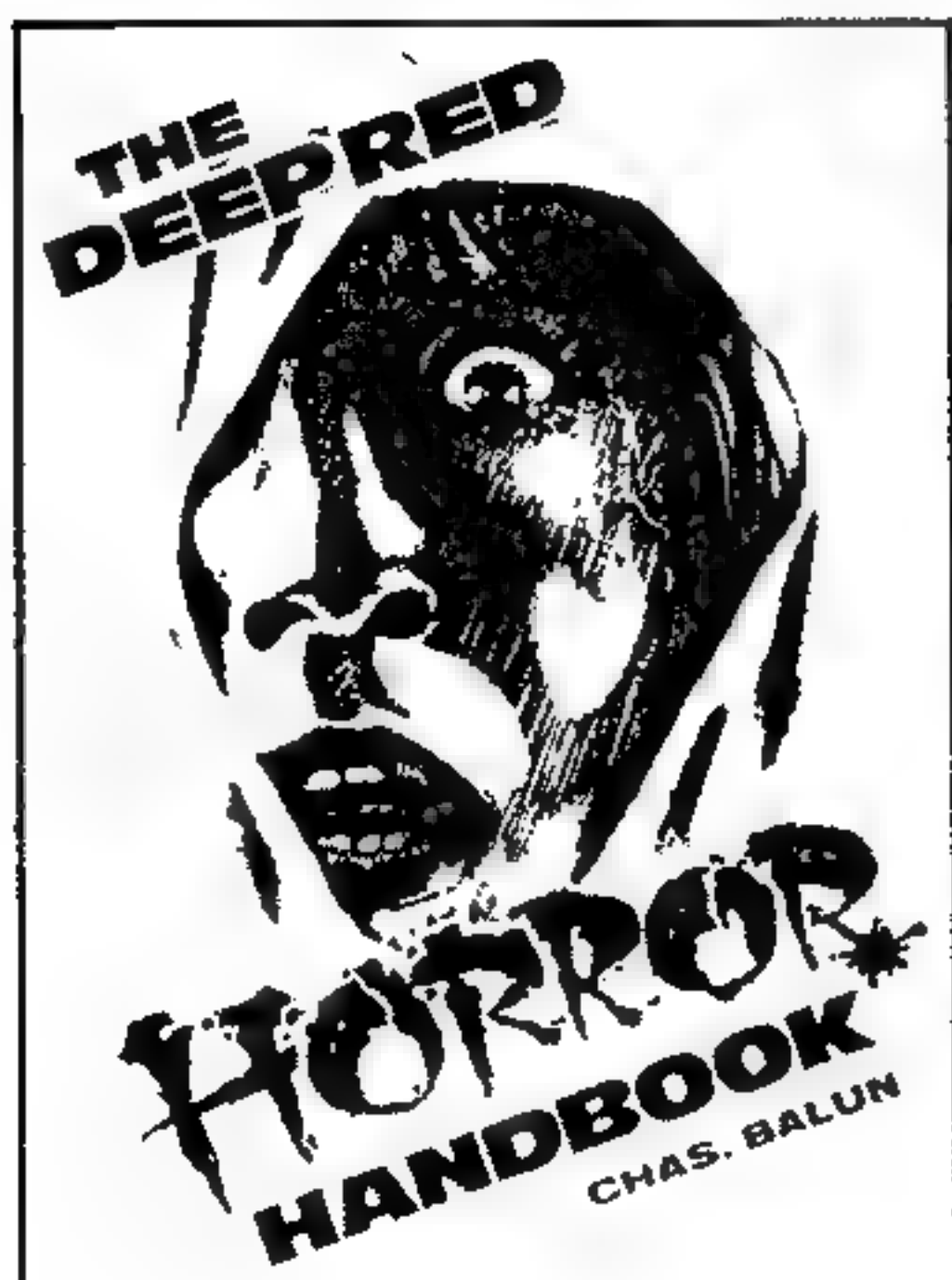


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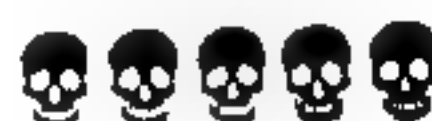
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12/00



AH, HERE WE ARE--
MRS. LEWIS'S REST HOME.

FOURTH CALL
THIS MONTH.

IT'S BULLSHIT... I DUNNO
WHAT SHE SPENDS THE
STATE CHECKS ON...

... BUT IT SURE
ISN'T FOOD AND
HEAT! I'LL
CALL IN OUR
ARRIVAL...



INTRUDERS.



BECKONED.



BY ANGELS.



(... writhing...)



(...in the silence...)



OF DEATH.



UP THE HALL.
YOU'LL NEED YER
GLOVES...



... AND A
BODY BAG...

THEY INTRUDE UPON
HER DOMAIN, WITH
ACCUSING EYES AND
ANGRY WHISPERS.

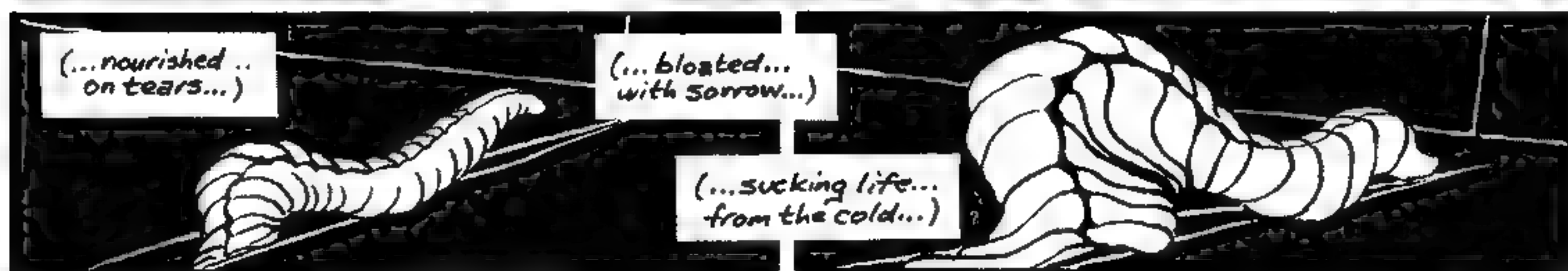


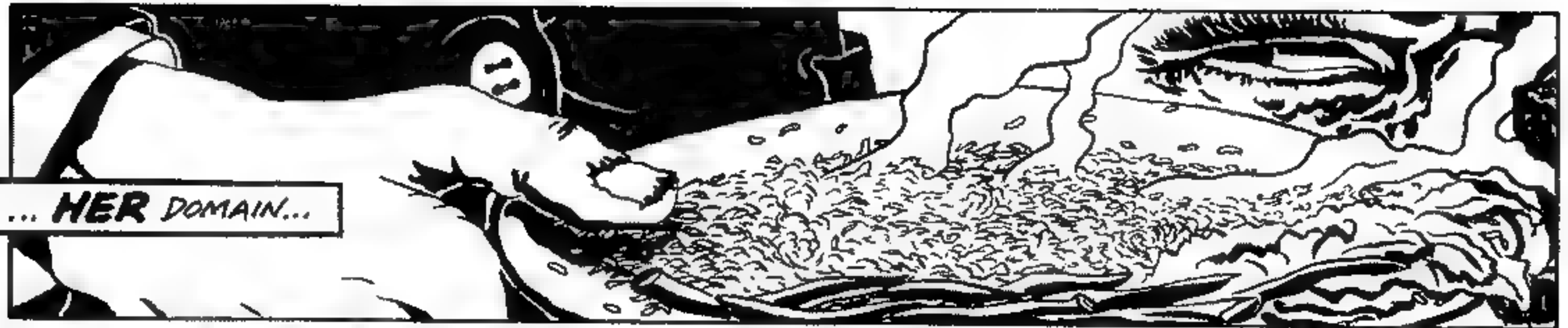


THE DOOR SLAMS, SHUTTING OUT THE INTRUDERS, THE GUILT, THE SUSPICIONS, THE INDELICATE QUESTIONS.













(...gasping...)

(...weeping...)

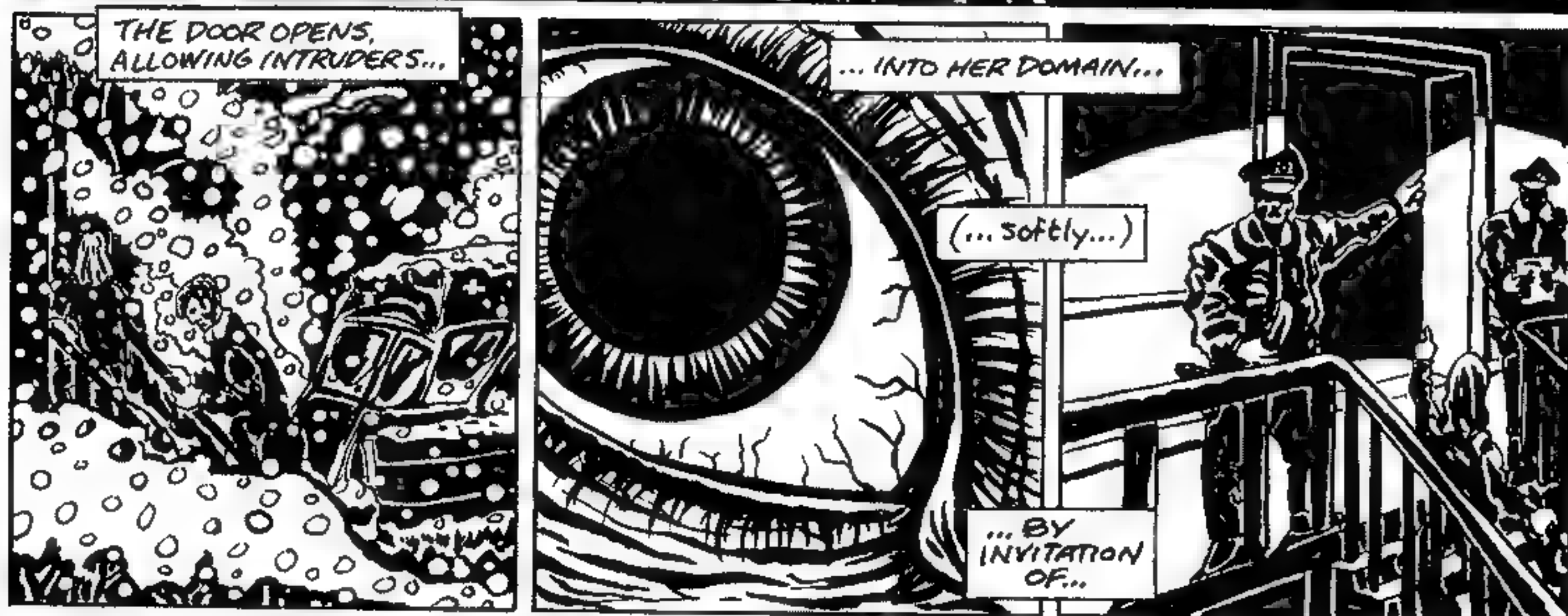
(...death's
tears...)

(...gnawing at
my back...)

(...feeding on my flesh...)



(...hungrily...)



DO YA WANNA

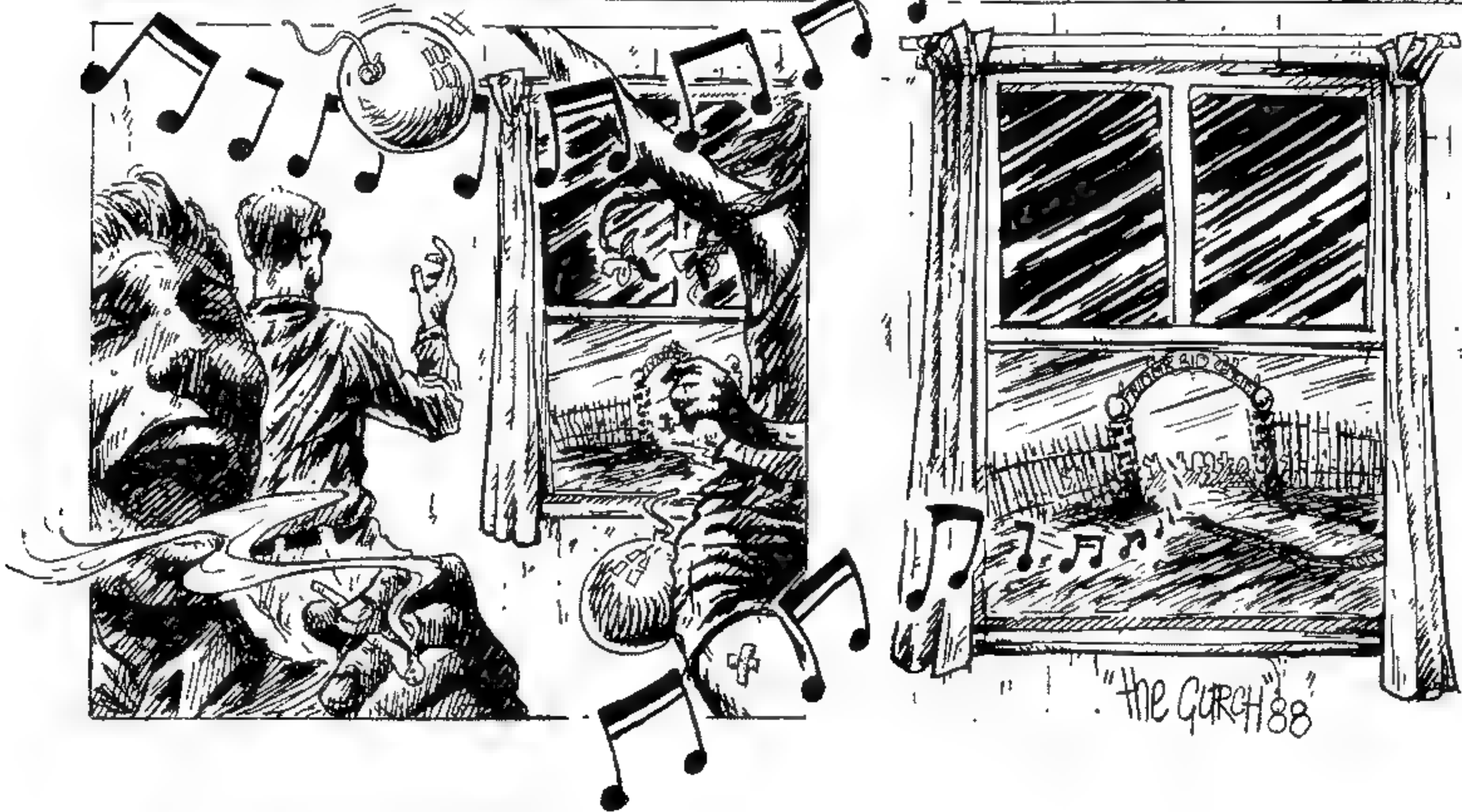
PARTY?

STORY: DAVID HERN

ART: GURCHAIN SINGH

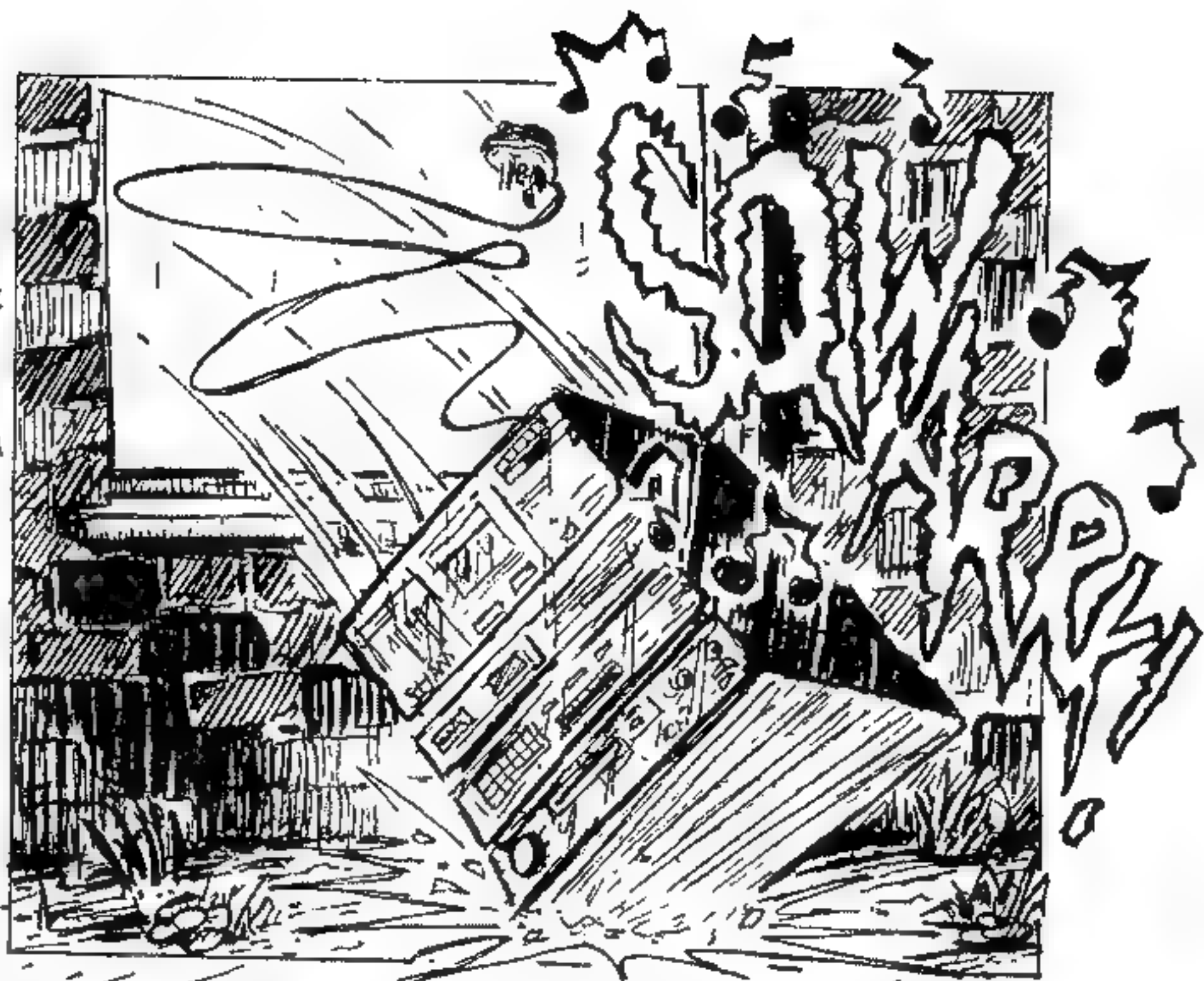
READER: YOU!

©1988











PREHISTORIC MONSTER (MAGAZINES)

by
Stanley Wiater

Copyright © 1989 by Stanley Wiater

By now it's generally agreed that Forrest J. Ackerman's **Famous Monster of Filmland** (which originated October 1958) was not truly the "world's first monster film magazine." Apparently that distinction belongs to **Screen Chills**, published in England a year earlier. (On the other hand, this doesn't change the fact that FM remains the first American magazine of its kind, lasting a stupendous 191 issues.)

Although the only and only FM went under some five years ago, the affectionately termed "monster magazines" are more popular than ever. For most of the past decade **Fangoria** (begun in August 1979) had this turf virtually to itself. However, the past year has seen the appearance of several new upstarts, including **Horrorfan**, **Deep Red** and **Slaughterhouse**. Not to forget the appropriately gory **Gore Zone**, which was initiated by the publishers of **Fangoria** when they realized there was a market for more than one horror film magazine.

This is great news for all of us cineteratologists working today. But way back then, in the prehistoric 1950's, why should any publisher believe the public was ready to read (more importantly: to **purchase**) a magazine completely devoted to a thorough examination of horror, fantasy, and science fiction films? The idea for **Famous Monsters of Filmland**, and its brothers and sisters in the 1950's — **World Famous Creatures** and

Monster Parade — must have had **some** inspiration from the mainstream publishers, to see if there was any interest whatsoever.

True, there have always been Hollywood fan magazines, which dutifully produced articles on such major horror stars as Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi in their heyday. But that was in the 1930's and 1940's. Following World War II, the horror genre was, for all purposes, dead and buried. Yet at the same time science fiction films were getting their first major exposure, with such box office successes as **War of the Worlds** and **Destination Moon**. The time was then ripe for the hybrid, the science fiction/horror films like **Them!** and **The Thing**. Once again, albeit under the guise of "science fiction," horror films were slowly but surely making themselves known. The monsters were coming back.

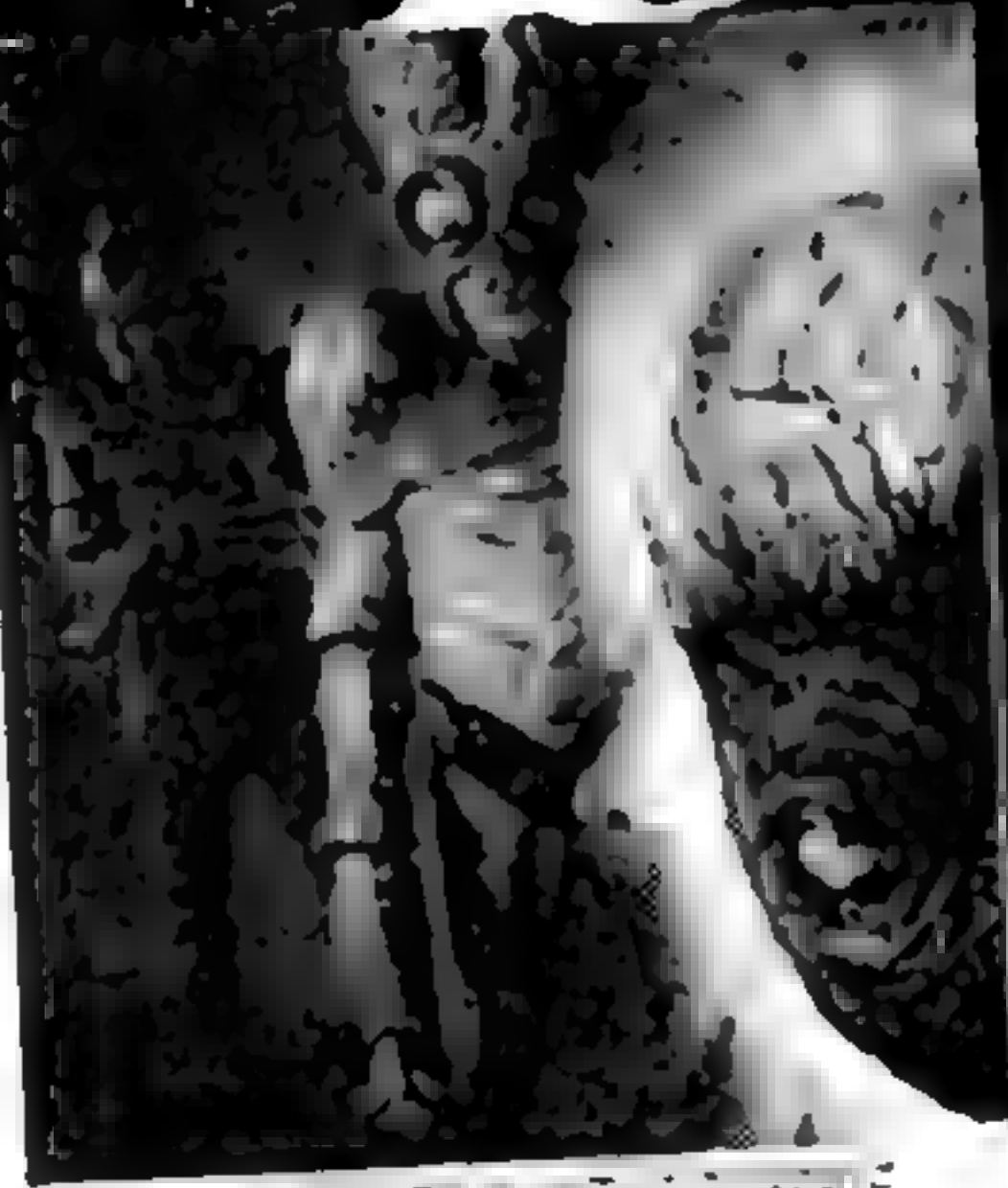
Perhaps the most famous monster creation of the 1950's was the **Creature from the Black Lagoon**. Released in February of 1954 by Universal-International, the film was a huge box office hit, eventually leading to two sequels, **Revenge of the Creature** and **The Creature Walks Among Us**. The Creature to this day remains one of the "classic" Universal Studios monsters, ranking equally with the Frankenstein monster, Dracula, the Phantom of the Opera, the Wolfman, the Hunchback of Notre Dame, and the Mummy. (It also later made for a great Aurora Plastics

© 1954 Mechanix Illustrated Vol. 50 #5
 Science Creates A Monster by Harvey B. Jones



MONSTERS MADE TO ORDER

By JOSEPH LATTIN





Intruders At The Gates Of The Mind

HORROR IN THE UNDERGROUNDS 1968-1975

— a Necronomicon that really exists —
by Tom Veitch

PART TWO

For a few years in the early seventies I wrote underground comics, working mostly with the artist Greg Irons.

Up until that time I had thought of myself as a novelist and poet. Big deal. Actually I was bored and exasperated with the madness of sitting alone in a room describing life to myself. Every novelist is, I think, a bit like the Robert DeNiro character in *"Taxi Driver"* — and the scribbling anti-hero *Rorschach*, whom Alan Moore derived from Scorsese's film. *"Novelism"* is a disease, a form of schizophrenia. If you do it long enough you start shooting at people from rooftops.

Comics, on the other hand, seem *alive*, closer to the energy of improvising on a musical instrument. The collaborative element has a lot to do with it — that and the immediacy of entering a reader's brain via *images*, through his helplessly pinned-open eyes. . . .

So once I got started, it wasn't long before the major part of my mental powers were being consumed by the making of comics.

. . . But, as I said in *Part I*, I kissed the undergrounds goodbye in 1973, little suspecting I'd be returning 15 years later to write this essay. There were a couple of direct causes for the separation:

In '73 the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision permitting every community to establish its own first amendment standards for obscenity and *"social relevance"*. This ruling promised to create a nightmare for publishers and distributors alike. Many of the big distributors reacted quickly by dropping underground comics from their lists. (Ultimately the Court overruled itself.)

Meanwhile, on another front, there was an upsurge of antiparaphernalia laws, resulting in the closing of the many hundreds of "headshops" that had sprouted like

seeds of *Panama Red* in the halcyon days of the late '60's.

Suddenly many underground comics artists, myself included, felt their income fall below the survival mark. Yean, people wanted to read what we were doing, but the channels of distribution were, for the time being, *gone*.

And, in my own case there was an additional factor. I had scared myself by writing really *"unthinkable"* stories like *"The Cleanup Crew"* (Skull #3, 1971). *"The Cleanup Crew"* is the ghoulish tale of Tort, who supervises the gang that scrapes human remains out of auto wrecks on the road. . . .

On the one hand, in writing these stories I was proceeding directly from my philosophy of *"thinking and unthinkable"*. I was exploring the absolute freedom of the printed page — taking the mind beyond the boundaries of the safe and the acceptable. . . .

On the other hand I was, at that time, finding myself subject to strange inundations of highly-charged images from the subconscious. Imagine waking in the middle of the night and seeing yourself pulling a huge centipede out of a hole in your belly. . . . Imagine waking in the night and the air is electric with ominous power and you turn to look at someone you love and her face is transformed into a hideous leering mask. . . .

Well.

A few years later, after I had managed to gaze long and deep into the dark places where these visions took form, I understood what they represented and why they came to be. But at the time they first appeared, like the dark exhalations of some serpent's tomb, I surmised they were the result of my indulgence in underground horror! . . . Really!

And so I quit. And went back to poems and stories about nice little bunny rabbits 'n stuff.

But you can't quit.

Once you've overstepped the boundaries of sanitized mental existence, you can never go back. You are doomed to wander a twilight world between life and death, gazing deeper even deeper into the dark abysses of the human situation. . . .

Doomed, I tell you.

Doomed!

In the first part of this article we spoke of a hypothetical anthology of the very best underground horror, a "necronomicon" of which only one copy exists. Looking through this anthology we examined the horror work of

Robert Crumb, Spain Rodriguez, Charles Dallas, Roger Brand, Jeff Jones, and Jim Osborne.

In the second part of the piece, we'll gaze eyes-open and mouth askew at the unspeakable creations of Rick Griffin, Richard Corben, Tim Boxell, Greg Irons, Basil Wolverton, and S. Clay Wilson.

As I mentioned last month, we've arrived at a fairly definitive list of the contents of this anthology, but we are wide open for your suggestions. If we've missed an artist or a story that you feel is a classic, please let us know, and we'll check it out.

RICK GRIFFIN

O.K., let's take a bit of a breather now with psychedelic surfer genius Rick Griffin, whose images continue to surface everywhere as icons of the '60's "counterculture". (Lest we forget, Griffin designed logos for the Grateful Dead and Rolling Stone, as well as turning out numerous classic psychedelic rock posters)

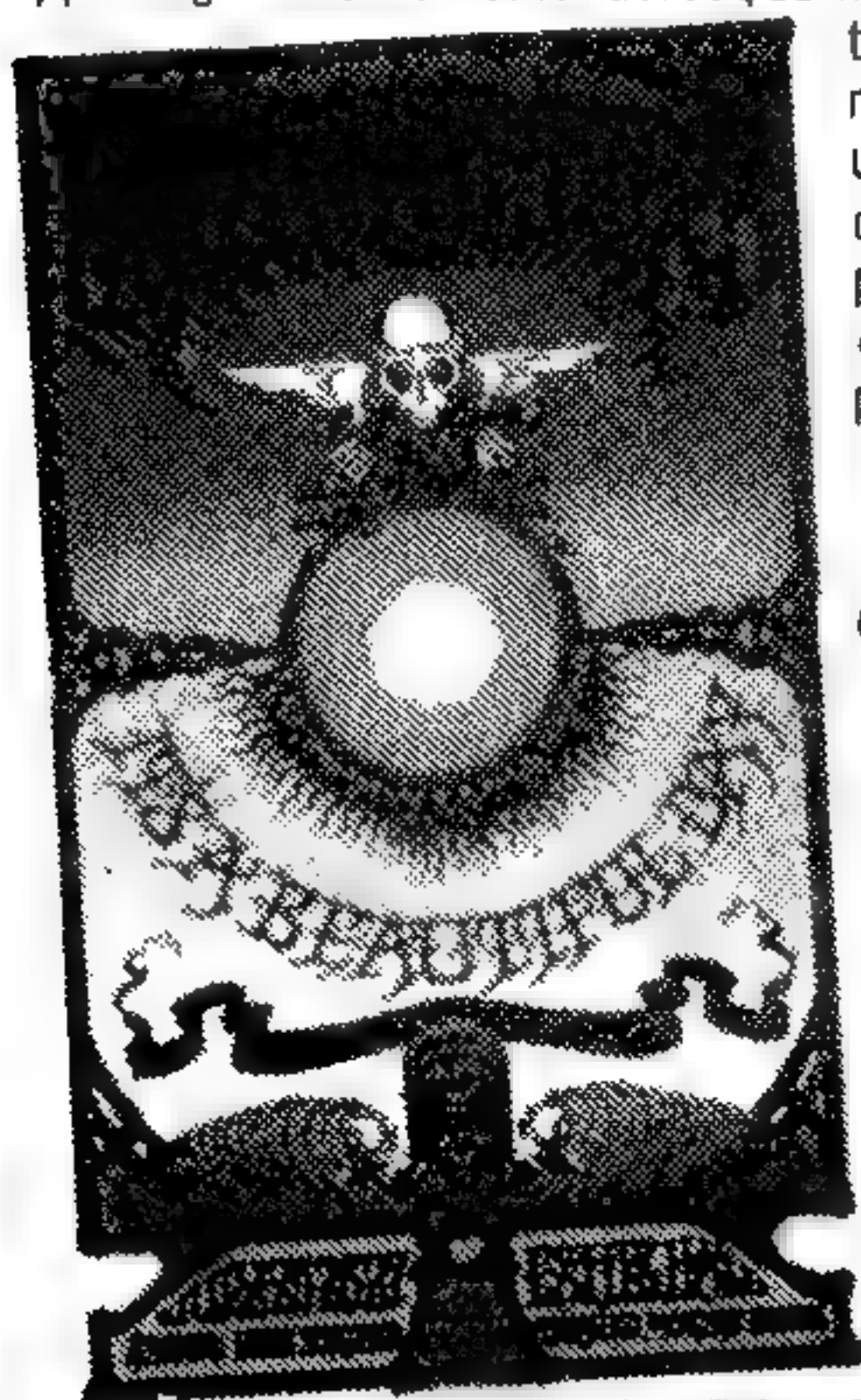
Rick is a horror artist in the Tibetan tradition. You know, those ancient stylized *tanka* paintings of fearsome bodhisattvas, their demonic faces dripping gore, girdles of skulls around their loins. . . . The Tibetans were (and are) great ones for seeing the dark side of God. So were the undergrounders. So was Rick, especially in his early work. Even his later "Jesus period" stuff resonates with rich undertones of dark cosmic mystery.

For prime examples of Griffin horror, see the early Zap's, *Bogeyman* (especially the collaborations with mad-child Rory Hayes), all of his work for the Grateful Dead, *Tales from the Tube* (1973), and *Man from Utopia* (1972). (A significant quantity of the original and only printing of *Man From Utopia* was recently discovered in a printer's warehouse in San Francisco. These are currently appearing on the market for about \$11 wholesale and up to \$20 retail.) Or maybe you can dig up a copy of an oversized paperback called *Rick Griffin*, published in

1980 by Putnam and remaindered for \$2.98 a few years ago.

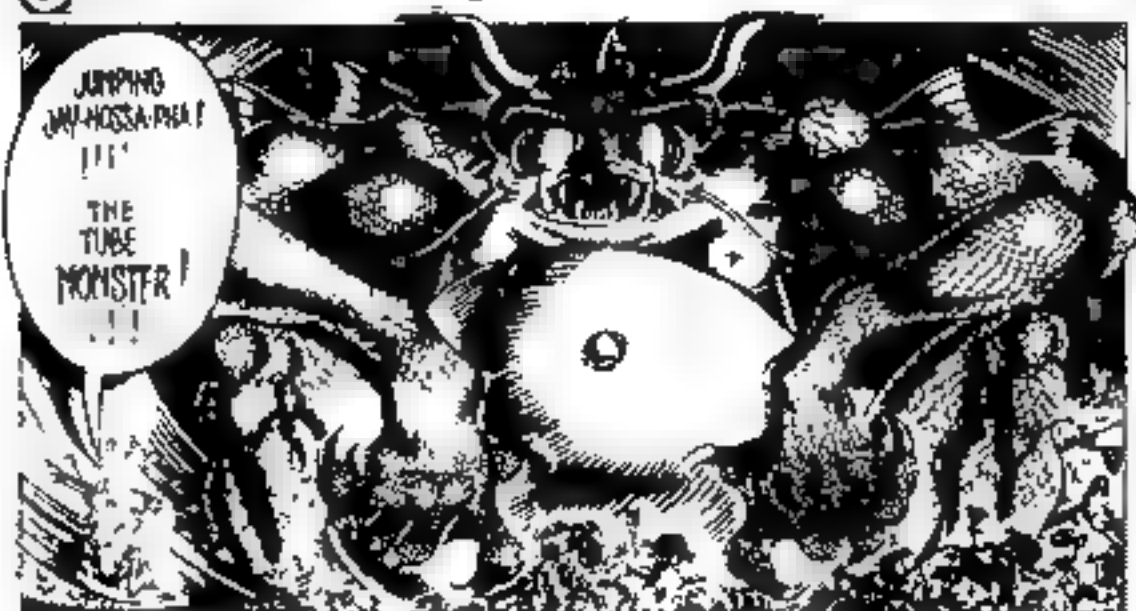
We include a few of Rick's images here, for your edification and delight. Do you remember what it was like seeing Rick's stuff for the first time? Kinda like somebody just peeled open the back of your skull and poured in raw ambergis.

Rick's distinctive visionary images deserve a place in any underground Necronomicon worth its salt.



© 1969
Grateful Dead
(Hawaii)
by Rick Griffin

© 1973 Surfer Magazine Tales From The Tube



By Rick Griffin



© 1969 Alan Aldridge/Beatles Illustrated Song Book
Why Don't We Do It In The Road By Rick Griffin

RICHARD CORBEN



© 1971 Skull #3 Horrible Harvey's House By Richard Corben

Yeah, Rick Griffin. But what about the guy Bill Griffith wanted booted out of comix altogether for the crime of drawing big muscles and big breasts?

In early 1970 Simon Deitch saw Corben's work in a fanzine and suggested to Gary Arlington that he invite Corben to join the underground. Arlington sent Corben a copy of *Skull #1* and the rest is history.

Richard Corben is one of the most significant underground artists, for a number of excellent narratives, including two I'll talk about here. But first take a look at his straightforward adaptation of Lovecraft's "The Rats in the Walls" in *Skull #5* (1972). Steve Bissette (who should know) says it's the best comics adaptation of Lovecraft ever done. Then, when you've finished that one, wander back to *Skull #2* and glom a Corben original called "Lame Lem's Love".

"Lame Lem's Love" is a comic slasher tale of ugly Lem, who is married to the beautiful and succulent (and big-breasted) Belle, somewhere in the Louisiana swamps. Belle is making it with every guy in town—everybody except Lem. "No, Lem! I tol' ya ten times already. I been feelin' too poorly for us to consummate our marriage!"

So Lem busies himself dispatching Belle's lovers in various gruesome ways, which leads into a retribution ending in the good ol' E.C. manner.

Corben left horror stories all over the place, in *Death Rattle*, *Fantagor*, *Weirdom*, and a bunch of other titles—not to mention the work he did for Warren, some of it full color.

To my mind his two classics are "How Howie Made it in the Real World" (*Slow Death #2*, 1970) and "Horrible Harvey's House" (*Skull #3*, 1971).

I will absolutely not reveal the plot of "Howie"—it's just too good to spoil. In fact it just might be the best single story in our anthology.

"Horrible Harvey's House" is one of Corben's finest love stories—heh heh: the bulbous Zara and her boyfriend Jarvas are shooting some nude footage in the country. When a storm comes up they take refuge in an old abandoned Victorian. Here Jarvas makes love to the bulbous Zara for the first time. Nice, but while they are asleep a disgusting creature named Harvey comes out of the woodwork and knocks out Jarvas with a club. Then

Harvey proceeds to violate the bulbous Zara in her sleep.

O.K., bulbous Zara wakes up screaming, and it looks like we're headed for a fairly predictable ending. But we're not. That's all I can say. Check it out of your local library, folks. It's horror-comedy at its best.

Over the years a lot of people have picked up on Richard Corben's distinctive use of light and shadow, his airbrush work, his amazing color effects, and his voluptuous females. Mainly through the stuff he did for Warren and *Heavy Metal*, he's established himself as a top fantasy illustrator.

But back in the early 70's he was all new and we were all raw amazement at his black and white pages. I remember when the artwork would roll in from Kansas City...for instance to Greg Irons' house, when Greg was editing *Skull*. Other artists would make a special trip across town just to get a peek at it, and then we'd all sit around talking about the artwork—for hours!

The word was that Corben was a "straight" who lived in a standard-issue suburban ranch house with garage and mowed lawn. He worked mainly for ad agencies in Kansas City and was now hoping to cut loose of the system through the undergrounds, self-publishing, and his work for Warren.

But in fact, even during his ad agency period Richard was as totally mad as the rest of us—maybe more so! His entire basement was outfitted for the production of comics and films (clay animation and SFX stuff he was fooling around with). Every character in his comics was first modeled in clay on a mechanical armature—the wide-jawed monsters, the women...even the spaceships. Richard was a crazed model builder who may have invented the concept of "kit-bashing" that George Lucas used to such effect in constructing his *Star Wars* ships. Corben was constructing fantastic starships the same way in the 1960's!

It has always seemed to me that Bill Griffith was displaying distinctly right-wing tendencies when he called for the exclusion of Richard Corben from the underground comix. To the rest of us Richard embodied the essence of artistic experimentation, autonomy, and taboo-breaking that made the undergrounds what they were.



Lame Lem's Love By Richard Corben

TIM BOXELL

Right, *Corben's* great—but the champion psycho underground horror artist was a guy named *Tim Boxell*, whose blood-drenched black and white pages mostly graced the publications of *Kitchen Sink Press* in Wisconsin.

Today, according to reliable reports, *Boxell* is in Los Angeles, working in films as an artist and designer. Back in the early '70's, going under the pseudonym "*Grisly*", he was churning out some of the most demented and terrifying images ever to see print.

I've chosen a number of *Boxell* pieces for our anthology — I could easily have included his entire output of that period. Like *Charles Dallas*, he was one of those artists whose "*line*" projected distinctive hellish vibrations... just to look at his brush strokes was to program your nervous system for psychosis.

For starters, take a look at the back cover *Boxell* did for *Bizarre Sex #1* (1972). A drooling doctor-type threatens a tearful woman bound in leather thongs. Yeah, maybe just another bondage fantasy? Not exactly. For instance, there's the onlookers in the gallery: supernatural monstrosities with cloven brains and testicles hanging from their "*faces*". The doctor's left arm ends in a double claw—not a prosthetic appliance, but some kind of animal claw growing out of the purple fleshy extension of his stump. A pretty sight.

Then take a quick look at the inside front cover of the

same issue for a *Star Trek* adventure *Kirk* forgot to write up in his log. Now flip through the book to a story called "*The Grip of the Grave*", about a guy who's into chopping off fingers with power lawnmowers, pruning forks, and razor-sharp power windows. For a breather, examine a two-page visual treat called "*Bread*", in which *Boxell* depicts penis-like croissants attacking and being attacked by your everyday breakfast roll!

O.K., now that you're warmed up to *Tim's* unholy vision, grab a copy of *Bizarre Sex #2* (1972) where you'll find a story called "*Swap*". Patented *Boxell* "*Martians*" exiled to a planet called "*Scad*" are preparing to return home by mentally synthesizing the "*quadrodimensional razor*":

When the rain age of mars returned every thousand years every Martian had to go home. The rains would wash soil from the hills, into the canals, and form the precious gelatin that gave the Martian race its longevity. Without ritual immersion in the gelatin no Martian could live.

An exiled Martian named *Otto* is responsible for synthesizing the razor that will help him and his mate *Martha* make the billion mile journey back to Mars. Unfortunately he's spent the last 600 years stoned on a Scadian drug called "*ulsif*" and his synthesizing abilities have gone haywire.

So *Otto* and *Martha* end up switching heads with "the



© 1972 *Comics From Mars #1*
A Piece Of The Beach
By *Tim Boxell (Grisly)*

© 1972 *Bizarre Sex #1*
The Grip Of The Grave
By *Tim Boxell*

© 1972 *Bizarre Sex #1*
cover by *Denis Kitchen*

first two earth people to be transmitted electronically through space."

After a few more plot twists the earth folks, Emma and Lester Bundt, end up keeping the monstrous Boxell Martian bodies — and find they're better suited for the orgasmic joys of the marriage bed....

I have to ask myself, what *is* it about this surrealistic saga that makes it a winner? Well, for one thing, the art — the "Martians" are completely original, unlike anything you've ever seen. Another is the ease with which *Boxell* moves into and depicts ideas such as the mental synthesis of bodies, mental space travel, and Otto's "compulsive synthesis of the images that steamed through his fevered brain...."

The character Otto could be *Boxell* himself, cut loose from the taboos and constructions which constrict most storytelling to the rehearsal of the social agreement that we inhabit a solid and ordered world.

Like other undergrounders, *Boxell* was awake to the fact that most of our confinements are mental — solidifications of mind-stuff... structures and strictures which prevent the creative possibilities inherent in human nature from blooming into manifestation...

That way lies horror, madness... and yes, the free unknown life of a consciousness that just might not be trapped in a body.

—Huh!—

—What does he *mean*?—

The taboo against knowing a terrifying possibility rises in your mind and asserts itself.

I mean, consider for a moment the hypothesis that even while "alive" you are *already* not in a body. What if your "body" is a "vehicle" you are synthesizing and projecting from somewhere else, from a very real "place" where bodies aren't needed?

Do you *know* that's not true? How do you know that? All you've got to go on is the "description of the world" that's been programmed into your perceptions since childhood. (A tip of the hat to Castaneda)

Underground horror was about cracking open the calcified descriptions of who and what we are and sending the mind reeling into the infinity of other possible descriptions....

I'd say that it's this aspect of the undergrounds that sets them apart from all the other horror traditions — even the current "gross out" school that dares to dance with the gods of death. Maybe it was the LSD that did it — the "ulsif". Maybe it was the unique vision of the '60's, assaulting the parameters of the conventional mind....

Whatever the case, the conventional mind has, for the most part, managed to withstand the assaults of the underground artists. The great underground horrors have been suppressed, forgotten, ignored, and buried under the effluent of fearful, restrictive fantasies that pours from the world's printing presses in an unending shit-tide.

Some of the other *Boxell* visions that are waiting for you are in *Death Rattle #1* (1972) and *#2* (1973). A story called "*Defiled*", about the brutal rape of a space traveler by an alien entity, may be the genesis of the film "*Alien*". (It was in *Boxell*'s story that we first saw the gruesome image of an alien "child" emerging from the chest of its human host.)

Then the untitled 12-pager in *Death Rattle #2*, a story that could be called "*The Curse*". I could write a book about this one, but I'll cut it short. Here's the last balloon and last caption of the last panel:

"The Girl? Nothing yet! Wait! There's a large non-metallic mass 1500 meters ahead. I'll move in closer to...AAAUGGG!!!"

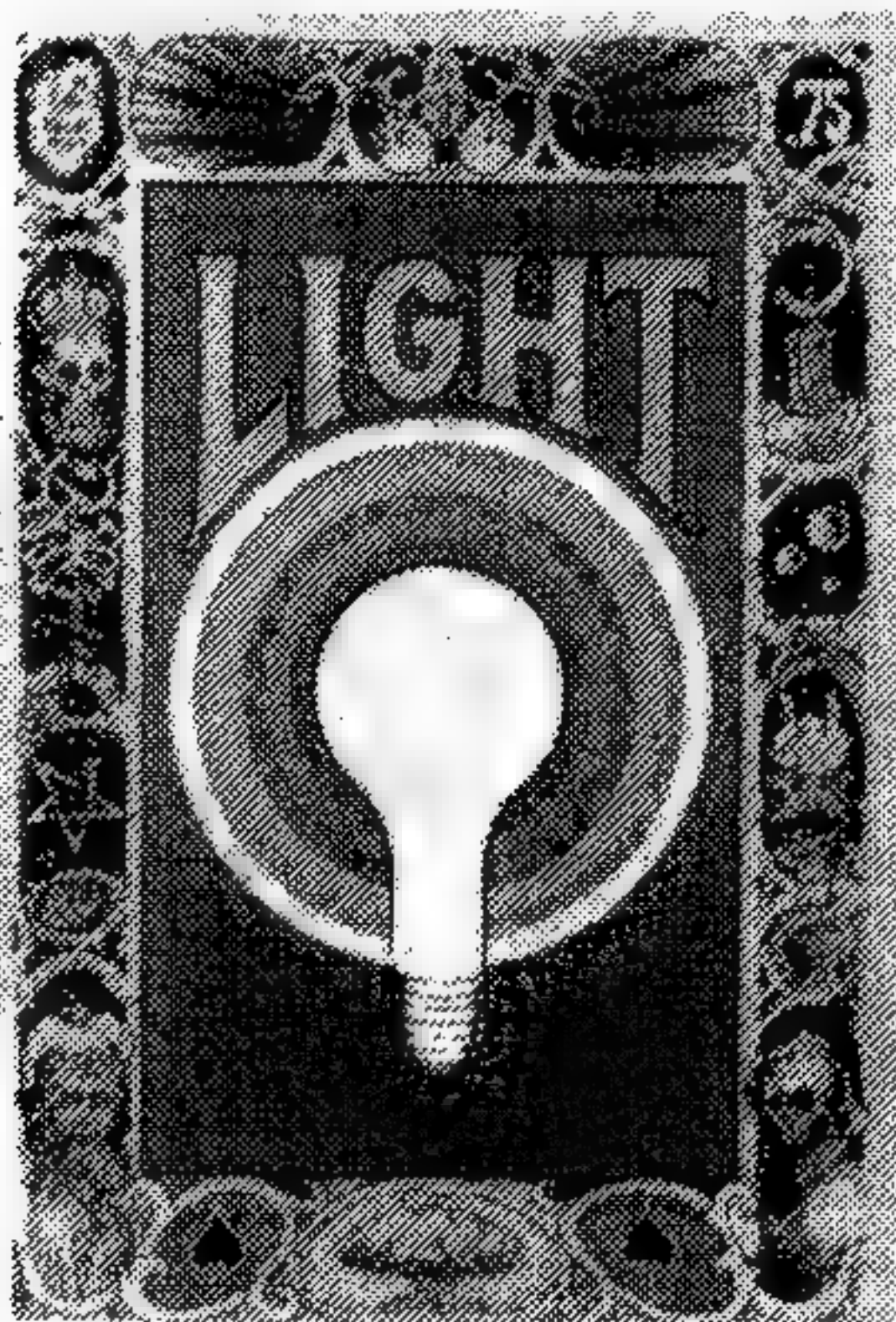
The scream is cut short as the ship breaks apart. The energy of the blast increased the effective range of the curse. An aura of destructive force projects into the space around her. And now she hangs in the void, mangled, pained, part-woman, part-monster. Thwarted in her bid for deliverance, denied the release of death. She can only wait for them to return to kill her. And as she waits she prays that they can.

* * * *

Before we move on to *Greg Irons*, I'd like to mention a little story by *Dany Frolick* that was in *Cosmic Capers #1* (1972)

This fairly ordinary SF-horror fable is remarkable for two panels—panels which depict the ultimate "vagina dentata" devouring its victim. Very strong stuff!

© 1971 Light/Print Mint
By Greg Irons



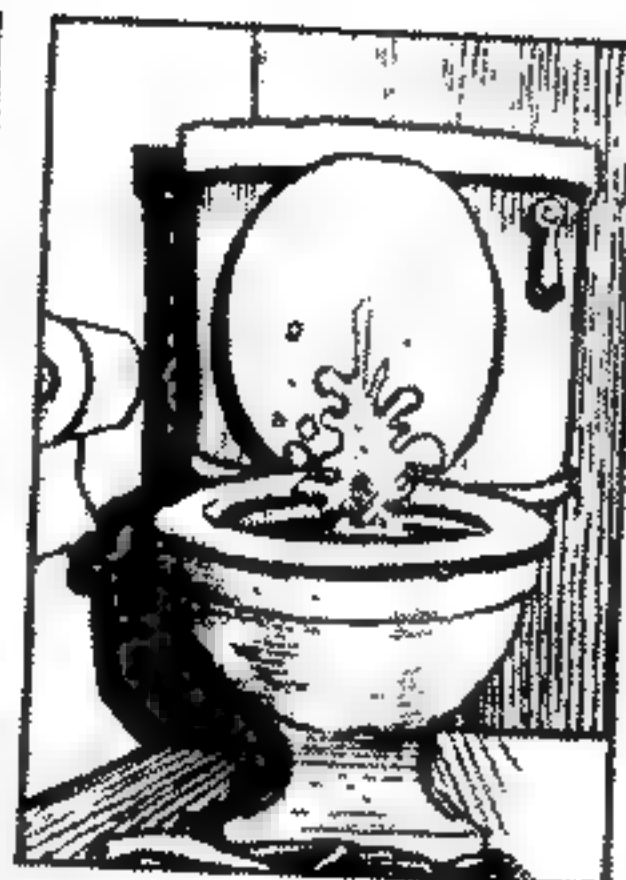
GREG IRONS

Greg Irons was my buddy, and I'm including some of the stories we did together in this anthology. But first let's look at Greg on his own, in the period up to 1971.

Greg would be 41 this year, if he was alive. (He *is* still alive, but that's another story.) He died under mysterious circumstances in Bangkok, Thailand, on November 14, 1984. The police report says he stepped off a curb into the path of an oncoming bus. But we'll never know for sure. There was no autopsy. His ashes were shipped home in a jar.

(Strangely enough, the same kind of accident almost happened to me in London, another city where the traffic flow is the opposite of what we're used to. In my case the artist *Cam Kennedy* was standing next to me and pulled me back to the curb just in time.)

There was unthinkable irony in Greg's death. Much of his horror art had to do with people being torn asunder by the mechanical products of our civilization. Indeed, he recognized that connection when he was hit by a Volkswagen in the late '70's and had his face ripped open by a windshield wiper. As he told me later, "I suppose I had it comin' — for drawing 'The Cleanup Crew'." We laughed. He meant that as a joke.



© 1970 Hydrogen Bomb
Funnies By Greg Irons

© 1970 Skull #2
Tall Tale by Greg Irons

Not long after high school greg migrated to San Francisco where he immediately got work doing rock posters for *Bill Graham*. It was the time of the hippies 'n acid and Greg was in the middle of it. He married his wife Evann in an open-air ceremony on Mount Tamalpais where all assembled were high on peyote

The first time I met him, in his Potrero Hill home in late 1969, we shared synthetic psilocybin together and found our brainwaves flowing together down a sympathetic channel that became a "groove" for many years to come.

Greg's art fired me up, and I remember the urgent feeling I had of wanting to collaborate with him, to bring to life all the imaginings I was only capable of putting into words.

He supplied some illustrations for a crazy novel that Andrei Codrescu and I were writing called *The Hippie Termites*. And then he invited me to write some words to tie together his book *LIGHT*, which Print Mint published in 1971. (*LIGHT* was the first full-color underground.)

Greg's horror work was without equal, in the sense that he was an *illustrator* in the school that dates back to Durer and the Renaissance engravers. He could have become a well-heeled gallery artist if he had chosen to. But that wasn't to be, for a couple of reasons. One was that, like many undergrounders, he was deeply suspicious about being exploited by "the establishment". Another was the dark vision that possessed him, that eventually drew him into the shadowy culture of tattooing, where he quickly rose to prominence.

... Imagine *Albrecht Durer* tattooing a dragon on a Hell's Angel's ass. That's the *Greg Irons* story.

Eventually there will be an anthology of Greg's work, covering every part of his career, including photographs of his amazing tattoos. (It's in preparation now.) But for the moment, let's look at some of the things he did in the genre of underground horror.

For example: a story from *Hydrogen Bomb Funnies* #1 (1970) This was done at the height of the Vietnam

festivities, when Nixon invaded Cambodia, anti-war demonstrations were breaking out all over the U.S., and the National Guard (minus Dan Quayle) was about to kill four students at Kent State. In the spirit of those times, Greg chose to depict some of the realities of war which had never been shown in war comics (even in Kurtzman's *Two-Fisted*.) The result was "*Raw War Comics*", in which we are treated to successive views of "combat-happy Joes" getting blown to bits in all the graphic splendor Greg could put into a black and white line drawing.

For example: "*Tall Tail*", from *Skull* #3 (1970). This 13-pager tells the story of Robarg, "a demented dwarf" pharmacist who has it in for "normals". Robarg is in love with a beautiful speed-freak named Felda. When Big Max Honky, a he-man type who buys "concentrated frog bile" from Robarg to increase his potency takes up with Felda, Robarg goes off the deep end. Combining his scientific abilities with the thirst for revenge, Robarg develops a chemical solution which can shrink living cells. He spikes the pills he sells and pretty soon the whole town is shorter than he is!

O.K., after the townsfolk agree to hand over Felda, Robarg feeds them an "antidote" which selectively enlarges different parts of their bodies, giving Greg the opportunity to draw bodies exploding in curious ways. "Meanwhile, Robarg fulfilled his weirdest fantasies" with Felda. As Robarg penetrates a miniaturized Felda, he injects his penis with growth solution and...

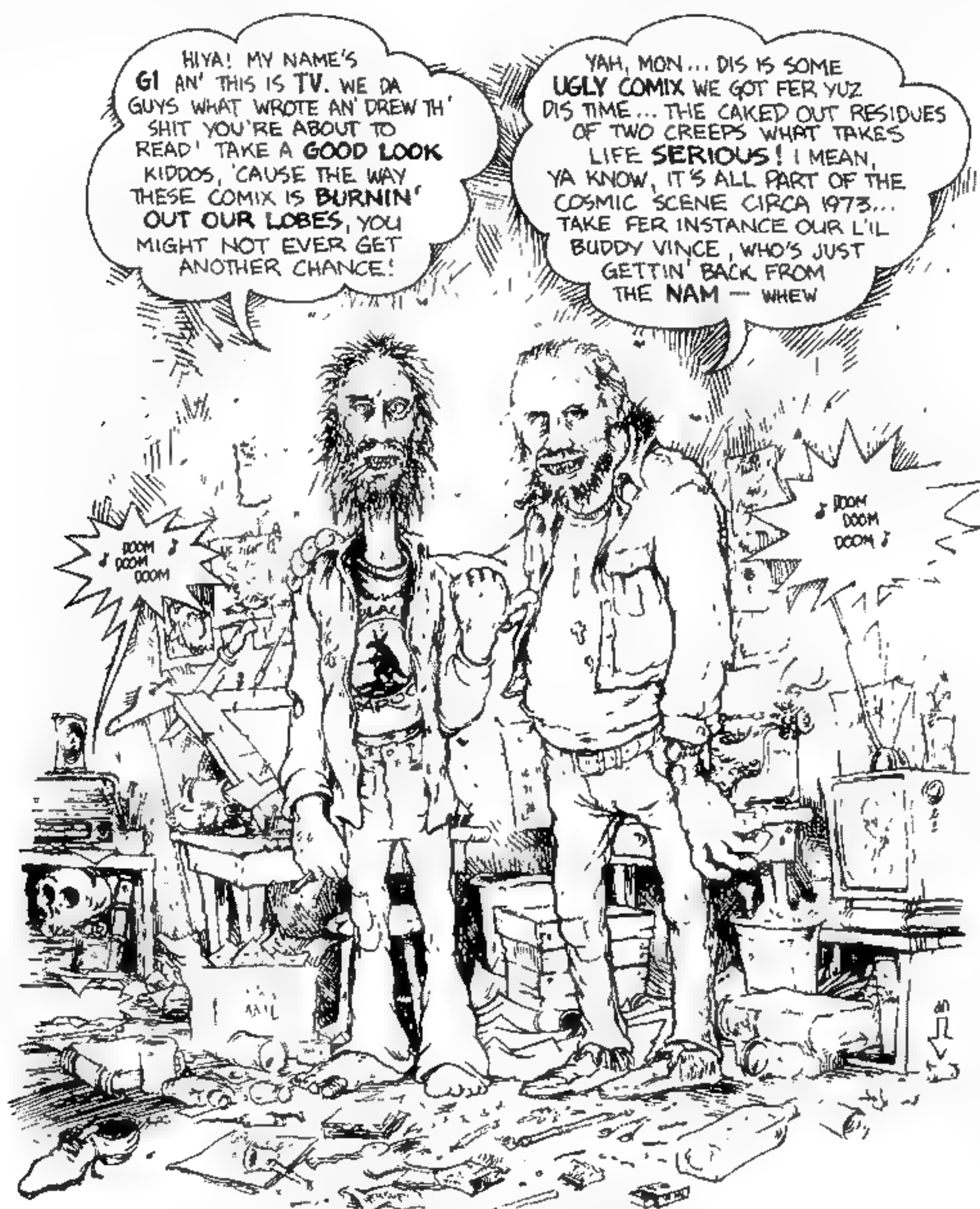
Well, you'll have to see for yourself. Needless to say, it's pretty disgusting.

LIGHT contains some of Greg's masterful illustration work, which we've reproduced here. His huge werewolf with erect penis has to be definitive. And the skeleton and skull motif was something he returned to again and again, rendering beautifully macabre impressions of bone with his Zen-natural brush.

Interestingly enough, one of Greg's secret ambitions was to do an album cover for the *Grateful Dead*. A number of

times he submitted drawings to them, even going so far as to leave one on the front seat of Jerry Garcia's car as a gift. But "the Dead" found Greg's renderings of their skull symbol a little too horrific. They preferred the sweeter visions of Rick Griffin and Mouse Studios.

To close out the section of Greg's solo work I've selected some amazing illustrations he did on commission to illustrate Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". These particular images weren't used in the final edition and have never appeared in print until now.



DEVILANT SLICE COMIX #2 © 1973 BY GREG IRONS AND TOM VEITCH. PUBLISHED BY THE PRINT MINT - 650 FOLGER AVE. - BERKELEY, CALIF. - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED BY G.I./TV. PORTIONS OF THE STORY OF VINCE SHAZAM ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE 'SF GOOD TIMES'. "YOU GOT A POINT THERE FOR" ORIGINALLY APPEARED AS A SHORT STORY IN "FUCK YOU" OF THE AGE.

TOM VEITCH AND GREG IRONS

Like much of Greg's solo stuff, the stories Greg and I did together usually had a humorous edge to them. And the humor was ghoulish, sardonic, full of black chuckles. (I resist using the word "evil" — we were just a couple of fun-lovin' guys, bouncing ideas off each other into the spatial twilight at the back of the skull, if you know what I mean.)

I don't intend to toot my own horn a whole lot in describing these stories. But I do suggest you look at them to get a taste of Greg's developing style.

Among the pieces I'd include in the ideal underground horror anthology would be "Last Gasp" from *Slow Death* #5 (1973) — a send up of publisher Ron Turner (who still owes me royalty money — Hi, Ron!). Go then to *Deviant*



© 1988 Greg Irons, Unpublished Art
From "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner"



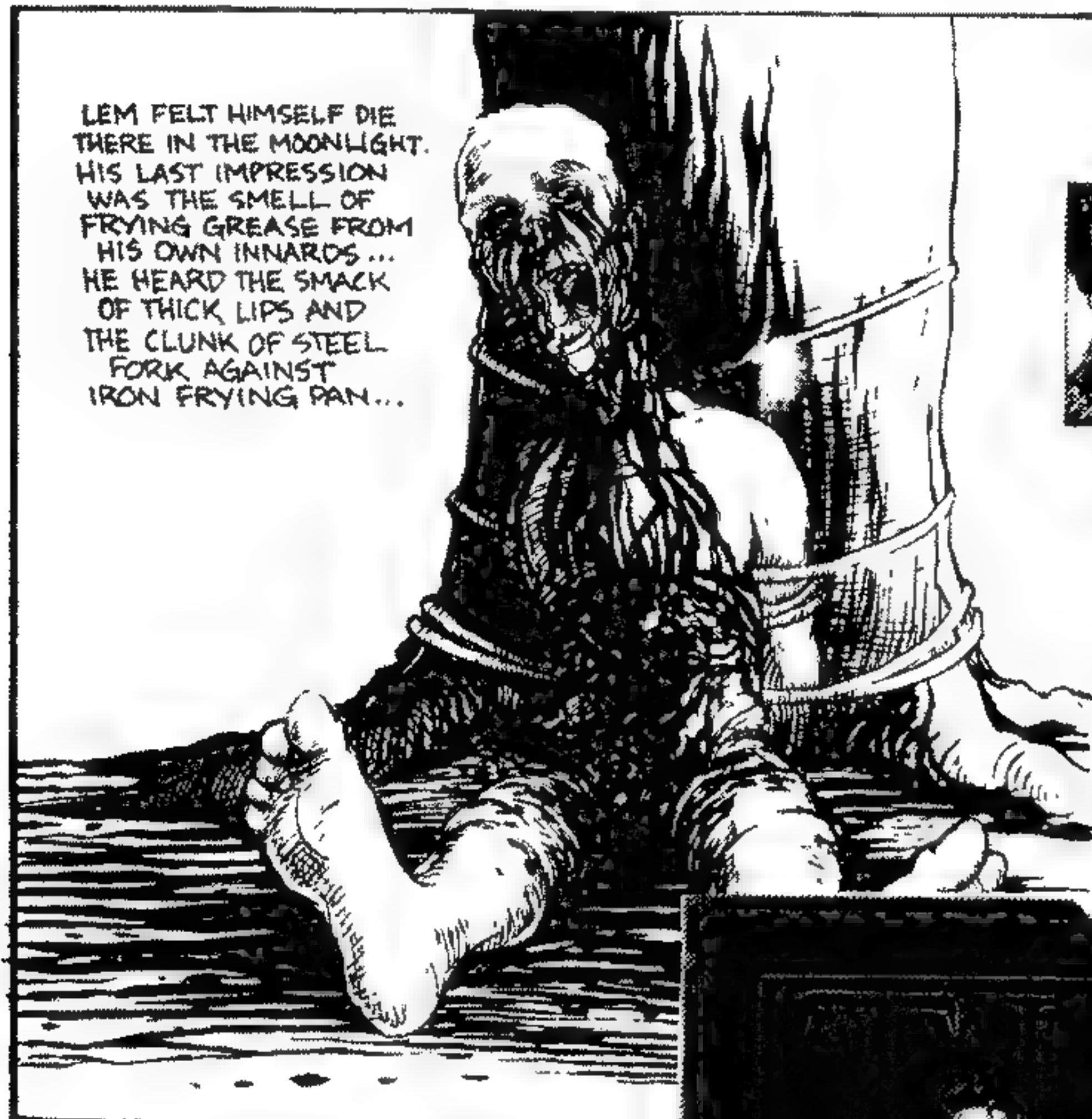
© 1988 Greg Irons, Unpublished Art
From "Rhime of the Ancient Mariner"

Slice #2 (1973) for "The Story of Vince Shazam", our tribute to returning Vietnam vets. "Vince" was originally created for *The San Francisco Good Times*, a counter-culture newspaper. The paper went out of business about halfway through running our story, so we finished it up as a 14-pager for *Deviant Slice*.

"Vince" is not a horror tale in the traditional sense — it's a horror tale in the real life sense: the horror of America turning against the sons she sent overseas to die for a corrupt and evil cause.

In the same issue of *Deviant Slice* you'll find an excruciating sexual-horror account called "You Got a Point There, Pop!" "YGAPTP" is based on a short story that came to me way back in 1964, when I was a lad in my early twenties, and which Ed Sanders printed in his infamous *Fuck You, A Magazine of the Arts*. American culture still hasn't caught up to it.

And then, the *piece de resistance*, "A Gothic Tale" from *Skull #6* (1972). Here we took the traditional gothic horror



LEM FELT HIMSELF DIE
THERE IN THE MOONLIGHT.
HIS LAST IMPRESSION
WAS THE SMELL OF
FRYING GREASE FROM
HIS OWN INNARDS...
HE HEARD THE SMACK
OF THICK LIPS AND
THE CLUNK OF STEEL
FORK AGAINST
IRON FRYING PAN...

© 1973 Hydrogen Bomb Funnies #1
You Got A Point There, Pop
By Greg Irons & Tom Veitch



© 1972 Deviant Slice
By Greg Irons & Tom Veitch



© 1988 Flenk By Greg Irons
and Tom Veitch

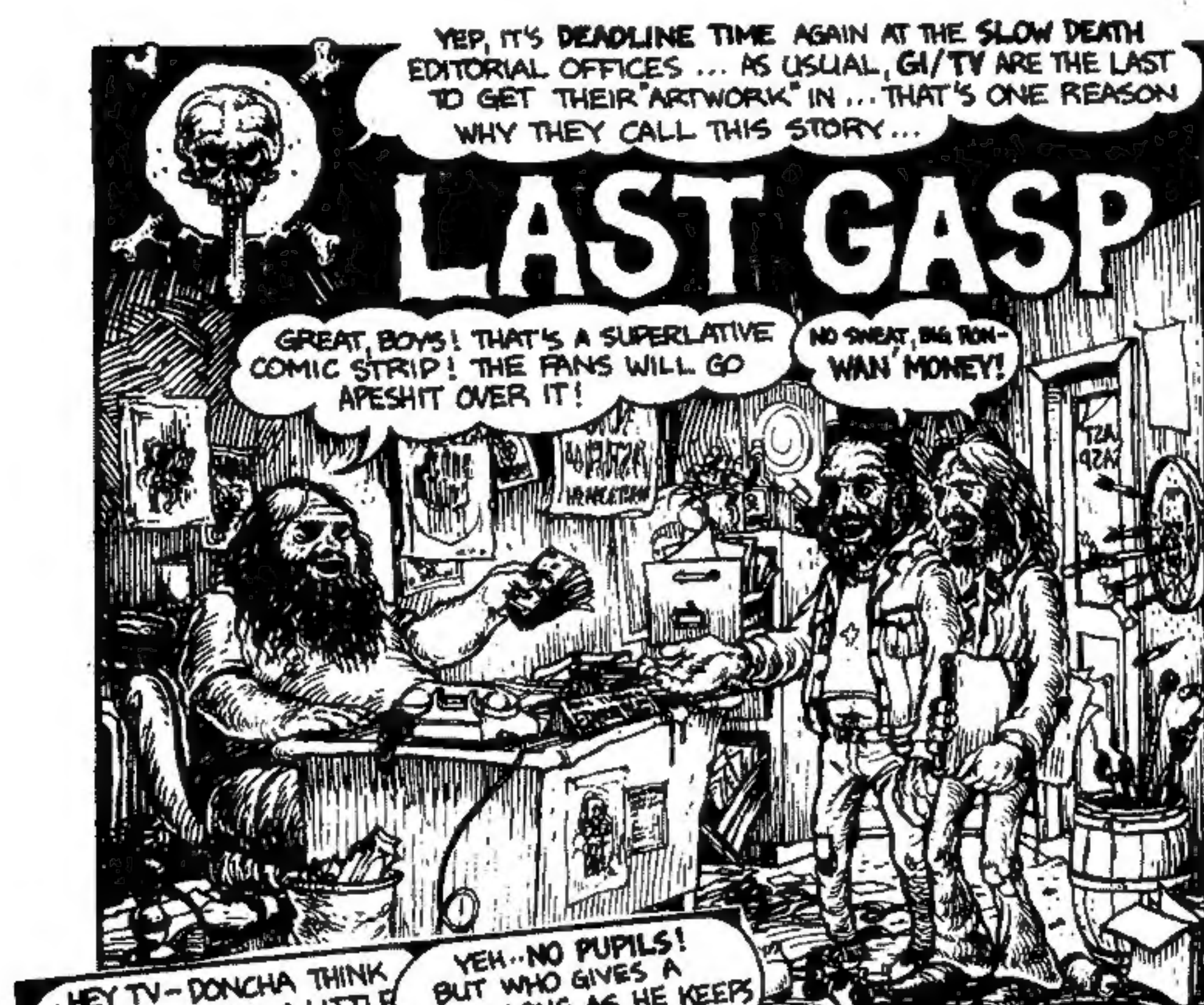
JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME



tale over the edge into psychasm and demonic revelation. Several people have commented that this story marked a turning point in their lives... an initiation, as it were, to existential terror... heh heh.

...Last but not least I'll mention the last story that Greg and I did — and the last story that Greg worked on before his untimely death. Although "Flenk's Last Tattoo" is not within the strict chronological confines of our anthology, it deserves mention here.

"Flenk" is about a mad old tattooist who creates tattoos that come alive and consume their wearers. It's a mystical horror piece, full of prophetic glimpses of Greg's fate. At the time Greg left for Thailand, it existed only in rough pencils. A sample of the savage style in which he intended to ink it is reproduced herein. As of this writing "Flenk" is scheduled to be inked by the highly acclaimed Mr. Bissette — probably in a style closer to Greg's earlier work.



© 1973 Slow Death #5
Last Gasp By
Greg Irons & Tom Veitch



Unpublished character designs
for "FLENK'S LAST TATTOO"
© 1988 by Greg Irons & Tom Veitch

BASIL WOLVERTON

One of the grand old masters of the art of the unspeakable was Basil Wolverton, and fortunately for us he published an underground, "GJDRKZLXCBWQ", which was brought out by Bill Bray in 1973. "GJDRKZLXCBWQ" qualifies Mr. Wolverton for inclusion in our highly exclusive anthology!

You have to understand, Basil Wolverton was truly "Mad's maddest artist", back in the days when comics had hair on their chests and the courage to venture beyond the stagnant sump-holes of buttoned-down civilization.

The moment when E.C.'s *Mad* ran their parody cover of *Life Magazine* was a turning point in my youth.

Wolverton's "Beautiful Girl of the Month" grinned fiendishly out at me from the newsstand, the face of the abyss of imagination that lies beneath the safety of the familiar.

As I recall, Wolverton's "Lena the Hyena" had already appeared in Al Capp's "Lil Abner" strip, to similar effect on my febrile brain. But the thing of it is — here was the magazine rack itself released from the straitjacket of society's artifice and pretense. Here was the cry of my own soul, staring back at me in a grocery store! That was it. The mind of the controlled and the expected collapsed. It was the beginning of everything that was to come.

And my father wouldn't let me buy that comicbook.

A LAST WORD—S. CLAY WILSON

Some people will disagree with the fact that I haven't included S. Clay Wilson in my underground Necronomicon. After all, hasn't he committed the greatest excesses of all and gone farther than any other artist in portraying the insane possibilities of horror in sequential art?

Wilson is what Wilson is. But in my opinion his work, at least from the period 1968-1975, exists entirely within its own world. As such it fails to generate any feeling that could be associated with the word "horror"



Compare Crumb's "Jumpin' Jack Flash", which bears certain superficial similarities to Wilson's work. Crumb's piece gives us a transcendent shock — the same feeling that came over us the first time we read "The Fall of the House of Usher".

Everything about Wilson's art is *already known*, from the first panel through the last. No abysses are revealed, nothing awesome unfolds, there's nothing there to be afraid of.

It's all just good clean fun.

Huh, huh.

And yet. . . .

I look again, in the way one is helplessly drawn to the scene of an automobile accident. A lot of information is being delivered here. I permit it to *shape* my consciousness for a few minutes.

Then I turn away or turn the page, and the mindstuff reverts to comfortable quiescence. I didn't make these godawful images. They were imposed—from without.

I look again.

Again I feel the mindsea taking the form of Mr. Wilson's black and white renderings. I examine the experience. I notice that the images do not seem to mirror anything lurking in my own psyche. None of the dark shapes rumored to be foraging at 20,000 fathoms are called toward the surface by these Wilsonian visions. The deep swimmers must be of a different species. . . .

One could question the mental health of this man, who feels compelled to vaunt such unspeakable fantasies. One could suppose he is driven by the same needs that caused normal American boys to commit brutal atrocities in Vietnam. . . .

But there is cataclysmic wisdom here. The more I gaze, the more I begin to understand.

We love to be seduced by art and by literature, we want to be carried away by vicarious experience — even the experience of horror. We want to lose ourselves in the awesome imaginings of another. But who but a raving psychotic could so identify with the art of S. Clay Wilson?

That's the point, exactly. For some unfortunate viewers, one supposes, Wilson's dreadful tableaux can be the signal that releases a fatal inundation from the subconscious — from the "id". For the generally mentally stable, another kind of effect is possible:

Like Bosch and Dali before him, Wilson shocks you *out of the picture*. There is no participation, no "ride", no catharsis. There is only this uncomfortable awareness that these ungodly images are shaping the mind stuff.

At that point we just might realize that *everything* around us (and in us) shapes the mind stuff, all day, every day. . . .that we are "television zombies", "newspaper zombies", "magazine zombies", entranced by the rush of "culture".

And that, gentle reader, is neither the only nor the most desirable of conditions.

Thus *horror* — and Wilson's horror in particular. Repulsed, sickened. . . .yes, we are truly repelled. And in that moment we are possibly shocked into awakening beyond the mind's taboo against knowing itself.

O.K., S. Clay, you're in.

Tom Veitch
September, 1988

We're catching up on mail, sooooo let's start on first base
with letters garnered by GORE SHRIEK...

Gory Shrieks!

Publisher and Executive Editor
Tom Skulan

Managing Editor
Steve Bissette

Article Design
Mario Bruni



Dear Editor,

I found a copy of your comic book and picked one up, while at a local store here, which is the first time since I was a teenager, that I had bought such a thing. I was curious about it and looked through it, and liked the production.

Since I do horror stories of my own, mainly for European distribution, I feel I have the knowledge of what is well done, and I think your comic was very well done.

Happy New Year,

—Dave Pierce
Phoenix, AZ

Dale writes and draws his own impressive graphic novels which have a following in France and Spain, including the Gothic western "The Wind Blows Death". Thanks for the good word, amigo!



Dear Sirs:

The first I heard of Gore Shriek was in the recent Amazing Heroes Preview Special. I am a super-hero comic collector, and was intrigued by the description that many things in your book would offend people such as myself. Of course, I bought a copy. I would like to tell you that Gore Shriek is fascinating and breathtaking. While trying to avoid further superlatives, I feel the need to tell you that I have been looking for a genuinely chilling horror comic and find yours genuinely horrifying and imaginative.

Thank you for your time, and thank you for providing such an enjoyable comic.

Yours,
George J. Grella
Brooklyn, NY



Dear Shriek,

Keep Gore Shriek going, its the best (only) Gory comic available over here. Thank you for the time spent reading this and for taking the time to look at my work.

Yours faithfully,
Brian Baker
Nottingham, England

Dear Gory Shrieks,

Wow! What a hell of a comic book. Gore Shriek is the best. Not only does it have tales of the macabre but, in addition, spotlights the writers and publications that have influenced modern-day horror comics. This aspect makes it more than a comic. Gore Shriek is a history book of the past, present and future horror writers and artists. Years from now when future comic personalities are asked what was their influences, you can be rest assured Gore Shriek will be tops on their lists.

Joseph Olszewski, Jr.
Philadelphia, PA



Dear Fantaco,

Thank you very much for putting out Gore Shriek! It's my favorite comic book in my whole collection. Your stories are so much more graphic than other wimpy mags like "Tales of Terror" — yawn. Even "Death Rattle" is good but your guts and flesh just fly out of the page and crawl into my brain!

All the artists are great. Keep up the good work.

—Joe Goldsmith
San Luis Obispo, CA



Gore Shriek is excellent! Bruce Fuller's work is beyond compare. Excellent cover on #2 especially.

I need a female cut off foot with red toenail polish size 6 or so.... Who has them?

Until next time.

—Geof Bale

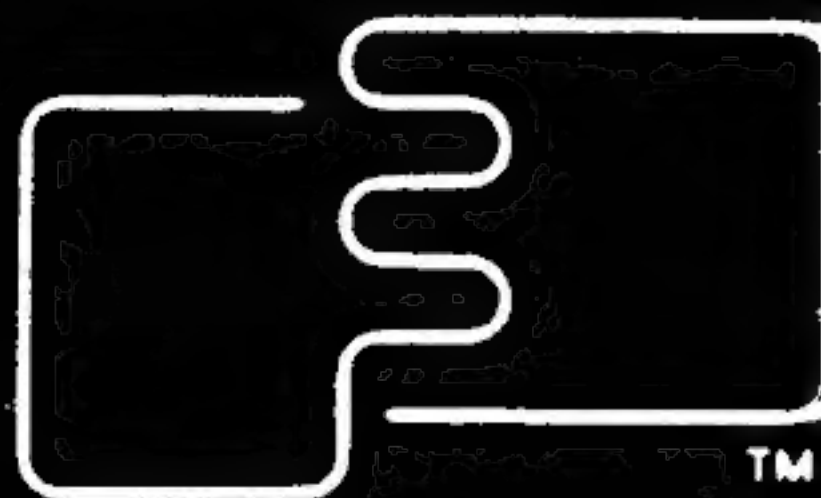
Hey, Geof, GORE has a whole bucket of 'em! He'll trade you one for a sucking chest wound and a mouthful of intestines... preferably warm. Yours, perhaps? Better let us know soon... GORE's stomach is rumbling!



Hey, more letters next issue... till then, why not drop a line? Write ol' GORE and SHRIEK (GORE will just use your papers to line his nest, so maybe you should just write to SHRIEK) here at:

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Fantaco Enterprises
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Albany, New York 12210-1391

GOOSE SHRIEK



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